

# Riddle In Hinduism

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## **PART III POLITICAL**

### **RIDDLE NO. 21 THE THEORY OF MANVANTARA**

The Brahmins had a theory of the Government of their country from Heaven. This seems to be the idea underlying what is called a Manvantara.

The idea underlying a *Manvantara* is related to the political Government of the country. It is founded on the belief that the Government of the world is entrusted to a corporation for a fixed period. This corporation consists of an officer called Manu and Saptarishis (seven Rishis) and one Indra conducting the affairs of the country from their seats in Heaven without consulting the people or ascertaining their wishes. The period of the reign by one corporation is called a Manvantara after Manu the premier authority in the ruling set. When the reign of one Manu is over he is succeeded by another Manu and so on. As in the case of the Yugas, the Manvantaras also move in cycles. Fourteen Manvantaras make one cycle.

The Vishnu Purana gives us an idea of these Manvantaras which is as follows:

"Then Brahma created himself the Manu Swayambhuva, born of, and identical with, his original self, for the protection of created beings; and the female portion of himself he constituted Satarupa, whom austerity purified from the sin (of forbidden nuptials), and whom the divine Manu Swayambhuva took to wife. Stopping here for the moment one might ask—What does this mean? Does it mean that Brahma was a hermaphrodite? Does it mean that Manu Swayambhu married his sister. Satarupa? How very

strange if this is true as the Vishnu Purana seems to suggest. The Vishnu Purana proceeds to say:

" From these two are born two sons, Priyavrata and Uttanpada, and two daughters, named Prasuti and Akuti graced with loveliness and exalted merit.

***(This is an 11-page MS of which last four pages are in the handwriting of the author.—Ed.)***

Prasuti he gave to Daksha and gave Akuti to the Patriarch Ruchi, who espoused her. Akuti bore to Ruchi twins, Yajna and Dakshina, who afterwards became husband and wife (again a case of a brother marrying his sister) and had twelve sons, the deities called Yamas, in the Manvantara of Swayambhuva."

"The first Manu was Swayambhuva, then came Swarochisha, then Auttami, then Tamasa, then Raivata, then Chakshusha; these six Manus have passed away. The Manu who presides over the seventh Manvantara, which is the present period, is Vaivaswata the son of the sun."

"I will now, enumerate, says the author of the Vishnu Purana, the presiding Gods, Rishis, and sons of the Manu Swarochisha. The deities of this period (or the second Manvantara) were called Paravatas and Tushitas; and the King of the gods was the mighty Vipaschit. The seven Rishis were Urja, Stambha, Prana, Dattoli, Rishabha, Nischara, and Arvarivat. And Chaitra, Kimpurusha, and others were the Manu's sons.

"In the third period, or Manwantara of Auttamin, Susanti was the Indra, the king of the gods, the orders of whom were the Sudhamas, Satyas, Sivas, Pradersanas, and Vasavertis; each of the five orders consisting of twelve divinities. The seven sons of Vasishtha were the seven Rishis; and Aja, Parasu, Divya, and others were the sons of Manu.

" In the period of Tamasa, the fourth Manu, the Surupas, Haris, Satyas, and Sudhis were the classes of Gods, each comprising twenty-seven. Sivi was the Indra, also designated by his performance of a hundred sacrifices (or named Satakratu). The seven Rishis were Jyotirdhama, Prithu, Kavya, Chaitra, Agni, Vanaka and Pivara. The sons of Tamasa were the mighty kings Nara, Khyati, Santhaya, Janujangha and others."

"In the fifth interval (Manvantara) the Manu was Raivata; the Indra was Vibhu, the classes of gods, consisting of fourteen each, were the Amitbhas, Abhutarasas, Vaikunthas, and Sumedhas; the seven Rishis were Hiranyaroma, Vedasri, Urddhabahu, Vedabahu, Sudhaman, Parjanya and Mahamuni; the sons of Raivata were Balabandhu, Susambhavya, Satyaka, and other valiant kings."

"These four Manus, Swarochisha, Auttami, Tamasa, and Raivata, were all

descended from Priyavrata, who in consequence of propitiating Vishnu by his devotions, obtained these rules of the Manvantaras for his posterity.

"Chakshusha was the Manu of the sixth period in which the Indra was Manojva; the five classes of Gods were the Adyas,

Prastutas, Bhavyas, Prithugas, and the magnanimous Lekhas eight of each Sumedhas, Virajas, Havishmat, Uttama, Madhu, Abhinaman and Sahishnu were the seven sages; the kings of the earth, the sons of Chaksusha, were the powerful Uru, Puru, Satadhumna and others."

"The Manu of the present seventh Manvantara is the wise lord of obsequies, and illustrious offspring of the sun called Manu Vaivaswata and deities are the Adityas, Vasus and Rudras; their sovereign is Purandara; Vasishtha, Kasyapa, Atri, Jamadagni, Gautama, Viswamitra and Bharadwaja are the seven Rishis; and the nine pious sons of Vaivaswata Manu are the kings of Ikshwaku, Nabhanidishtha, Karusha, Prishadhra, and the celebrated Vasumat." So far the particulars of seven Manvantaras which are given by the Vishnu Purana relate to Manvantaras which had run out at the time when the Vishnu Purana was written. Whether the rule of the Manvantaras was an external one the Brahmins have been silent. But the author of the Vishnu Purana knew that seven more Manvantaras were to come. Below are given the particulars of these seven.

"Sanjana, the daughter of Vishwakarman was the wife of the sun, and bore him, three children, the Manu (Vaivaswata), Yama and the goddess Yami (or the Yamuna river). Unable to endure the fervours of her lord, Sanjana gave him Chhaya as his handmaid, and repaired to the forests to practise devout exercises. The sun, supposing Chhaya to be his wife Sanjana, begot by her three other children Sanaischara (Saturn), another Manu (Savarni) and a daughter Tapati (the Tapti river). Chhaya upon one occasion, being offended with Yama, the son of Sanjana, denounced an imprecation upon him, and thereby revealed to Yama and to the sun that she was not in truth Sanjana, the mother of the former. Being further informed by Chhaya that his wife had gone to the wilderness the sun beheld her by the eye of meditation engaged in austerities, in the figure of a mare (in the region of Uttara Kuru). Metamorphosing himself into a horse, he rejoined his wife, and begot three other children, the two Aswins, and Revanta, and then brought Sanjana back to his own dwelling. To diminish his intensity, Vishwakaraman placed the luminary on his lathe to grind off some of his effulgence; and in this manner reduced it an eighth: for more than that was inseparable. The parts of the divine Vaishnava splendour, residing in the sun, that were filed off by Viswakaraman fell blazing down upon the earth, and the artist constructed of them the discuss of Vishnu, the trident of Shiva, the weapon of the god of

wealth, the lance of Kartikeya, and the weapons of the other gods: all these Viswakarman fabricated from the superfluous rays of the sun."

"The son of Chhaya, who was called also a Manu was denominated Savarni, from being of the same caste (Savarni) as his elder brother, the Manu Vaivaswata. He presides over the ensuing or eighth Manvantara; the particulars of which and the following, I will now relate. In the period in which Savarni shall be the Manu, the classes of the gods will be Sutapas, Ambitabhas and Mukhyas: twenty-one of each. The seven Rishis will be Diptimat, Galava, Rama, Kripa, Drauni; my son Vyasa will be the sixth and the seventh will be Rishyasringa. The Indra will be Bali, the sinless son of Virochana who through the favour of Vishnu is actually sovereign of part of Patala. The royal progeny of Savarni will be Virajas, Arvarivas, Nirmoha, and others."

"The ninth Manu will be Dakshasavarni. The Paras, Marichigarbhas and Sudharnas- will be the three classes of divinities; each consisting of twelve, their powerful chief will be the Indra Adbhuta Savana, Dyutimat, Bhavya, Vasu, Medhatithi, Jyotishaman and Satya, will be the seven Rishis. Dhritketu, Driptiket, Panchahasta, Nirmaya, Prithusrava, and others will be the sons of the Manu.

"In the tenth Manwantara the Manu will be Brahma-savarni; the gods will be the Sudhamas, Virudhas, and Satasankhyas; the Indra will be the mighty Santi; the Rishis will be Havishaman, Sukriti, Satya, Appammurthi, Nabhaga, Apratimaujas and Satyaketu; and the ten sons of the Manu will be Sukshetra, Uttamaujas, Harishena and others."

"In the eleventh Manwantara the Manu will be Dharma-savarni; the principal classes of gods will be the Vihangamas. Karnagamas, and the Nirmanaratis, each thirty in number; of whom Vrisha will be the Indra; the Rishis will be Nischara, Agnitejas, Vapushaman, Vishnu, Aruni, Havishaman, and Anagha; the kings of the earth, and sons of the Manu, will be Savarga, Sarvadhama, Devanika, and others."

"In the twelfth Manvantara the son of Rudra-Savarni, will be the Manu; Ritudhama will be the Indra; and the Haritas, Lohitas; Sumanasas and Sukramas will be the classes of gods, each comprising fifteen Tapaswi, Sutapas, Tapomurti, Taporti, Tapodhriti, Tapodyuti and Tapodhana will be the Rishis; and Devas, Upadeva, Devasreshtha and others will be the man's sons, and mighty monarchs on the earth."

"In the thirteenth Manvantara the Manu will be Rauchya; the classes of gods, thirty-three in each, will be Sudhamanas, Sudharmans and Sukarmanas, their Indra will be Divaspati;

the Rishis will be Nirmoha, Tatwadersin, Nishprakampa, Nirutsuka,

Dhritimat, Avyaya and Sutapas; and Chitrasena, Vichitra, and others will be the kings."

" In the fourteenth Manvantara, Bhautya will be the Manu; Suchi, the Indra; the five classes of gods will be the Chakshushas, the Pavitras, Kanishthas Bhrajiras and Vavridhdhas; the seven Rishis will be Agnibahu, Suchi, Sikra, Magadha, Gridhra, Yukta and Ajita; and the sons of the Manu will be Uru, Gabhir, Gabhira, Bradhna and others who will be kings, and will rule over, the earth." Such is the theory of Manvantaras. We now hear of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The Brahmanic theory was just the opposite of it. It was a theory of the Dictatorship over the Proletariat by the Heavenly fathers.

Be that as it may the question that primarily comes to one's mind is: How these fourteen Manus who succeeded one another rule the people? What laws did they make for the governance of the people? The only place where one can get an answer is the Manusmriti.

Referring to the first chapter of Manusmriti we get the following answer:

Ch. I. 1. The great sages approached Manu, who was seated with a collected mind, and, having duly worshipped him spoke as follows:

2. Deign, divine one, do declare to us precisely and in due order the sacred laws of each of the (four chief) castes (Varna) and of the intermediate ones.

3. For thou, O Lord, alone knowest the purport of the rites and knowledge of the Soul taught in this whole ordinance of the Swayambhu (Manu) which is unknowable and unfathomable. Manu replies to them saying:

5. This universe existed in the shape of darkness unperceived, destitute of distinctive marks, unattainable by reasoning, unknowable, wholly immersed as it were in deep sleep.

8. Swayambhu Manu desiring to produce beings of many kinds from his own body, first with a thought created the waters and placed his seed in them.

9. That (Seed) became a golden egg, in brilliancy equal to the sun; in that Egg he himself was born as Brahman, the progenitor of the whole world.

34. Then, I, desiring to produce created beings performed very difficult austerities and thereby called into existence ten great sages, lords of created beings.

35. Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Prachetas, Vashishta, Bhrugu and Narada.

58. But he having composed these Institutes of the sacred law, himself taught them, according to rule, to me alone in the beginning: next I taught them to Marichi and the other sages.

59. Bhrigu will fully recite to you these Institutes; for that sage learned the whole in its entirety from me.

From this it appears that the only Manu who made laws was the

Swayambhu Manu. According to Vishnu Purana, each Manvantara had its own Manu. Why did they not make laws for their own Manvantara. Or was it the laws made by Swayambhu Manu were to be Eternal. If so, why did the Brahmins have separate Manvantara.

## RIDDLE NO. 22

### BRAHMA IS NOT DHARMA. WHAT GOOD IS BRAHMA?

There are various forms of Government known to history—Monarchy, Aristocracy and Democracy to which may be added Dictatorship.

The most prevalent form of Government at the present time is Democracy. There is however no unanimity as to what constitutes Democracy. When one examines the question one finds that there are two views about it. One view is that Democracy is a form of Government. According to this view where the Government is chosen by the people that is where Government is a representative Government there is Democracy. According to this view Democracy is just synonymous with Representative Government which means adult suffrage and periodical elections.

According to another view a democracy is more than a form of Government. It is a form of the organization of Society. There are two essential conditions which characterize a democratically constituted society. First is the absence of stratification of society into classes. The Second is a social habit on the part of individuals and groups which is ready for continuous readjustment or recognition of reciprocity of interests. As to the first there can be no doubt that it is the most essential condition of Democracy. As Prof. Dewey has observed: [*Quotation referred to by the author is not recorded in the original MS from ' Democracy and Education ', by Dewey p. 98.*] The second condition is equally necessary for a democratically constituted society.

***This chapter consists about 20 pages out of which first two pages and the concluding six are in the handwriting of the author. The rest are typed pages with all necessary modifications by Dr. Ambedkar.—Ed.***

The results of this lack of reciprocity of interests among groups and individuals produce anti-democratic results which have been well described by Prof. Dewey when he says: [*Quotation from 'Democracy and Education ' of page 99 referred to by the author is not recorded in the original MS.*]

Of the two views about democracy there is no doubt that the first one is very superficial if not erroneous. There cannot be democratic Government unless

the society for which it functions is democratic in its form and structure. Those who hold that democracy need be no more than a mere matter of elections seem to make three mistakes.

One mistake they make is to believe that Government is something which is quite distinct and separate from society. As a matter of fact Government is not something which is distinct and separate from Society. Government is one of the many institutions which Society rears and to which it assigns the function of carrying out some of the duties which are necessary for collective social life.

The Second mistake they make lies in their failure to realize that a Government is to reflect the ultimate purposes, aims, objects and wishes of society and this can happen only where the society in which the Government is rooted is democratic. If society is not democratic, Government can never be. Where society is divided into two classes governing and the governed the Government is bound to be the Government of the governing class.

The third mistake they make is to forget that whether Government would be good or bad democratic or undemocratic depends to a large extent up on the instrumentalities particularly the Civil Service on which every where Government has to depend for administering the Law. It all depends upon the social milieu in which civil servants are nurtured. If the social milieu is undemocratic the Government is bound to be undemocratic.

There is one other mistake which is responsible for the view that for democracy to function it is enough to have a democratic form of Government. To realize this mistake it is necessary to have some idea of what is meant by good Government.

Good Government means good laws and good administration. This is the essence of good Government. Nothing else can be. Now there cannot be good Government in this sense if those who are invested with ruling power seek the advantage of their own class instead of the advantage of the whole people or of those who are downtrodden. Whether the Democratic form of Government will result in good will depend upon the disposition of the individuals composing society. If the mental disposition of the individuals is democratic then the democratic form of Government can be expected to result in good Government. If not, democratic form of Government may easily become a dangerous form of Government. If the individuals in a society are separated into classes and the classes are isolated from one another and each individual feels that his loyalty to his class must come before his loyalty to every thing else and living in class compartments he becomes class conscious bound to place the interests of his class above the interests of others, uses his authority to pervert law and justice to promote the interests of

his class and for this purpose practises systematically discrimination against persons who do not belong to his caste in every sphere of life what can a democratic Government do. In a Society where classes clash and are charged with anti-social feelings and spirit of aggressiveness, the Government can hardly discharge its task of governing with justice and fairplay. In such a society, Government even though it may in form be a government of the people and by the people it can never be a Government for the people. It will be a Government by a class for a class. A Government for the people can be *had* only where the attitude of each individual is democratic which means that each individual is prepared to treat every other individual as his equal and is prepared to give him the same liberty which he claims for himself. This democratic attitude of mind is the result of socialization of the individual in a democratic society. Democratic society is therefore a prerequisite of a democratic Government. Democratic Governments have toppled down in largely due to the fact that the society for which they were set up was not democratic.

Unfortunately to what extent-the task of good Government depends upon the mental and moral disposition of its subjects has seldom been realized. Democracy is more than a political machine. It is even more than a social system. It is an attitude of mind or a philosophy of life.

Some equate Democracy with equality and liberty. Equality and liberty are no doubt the deepest concern of Democracy. But the more important question is what sustains equality and liberty? Some would say that it is the law of the state which sustains equality and liberty. This is not a true answer. What sustains equality and liberty is fellow-felling. What the French Revolutionists called fraternity. The word fraternity is not an adequate expression. The proper term is what the Buddha called, Maitree. Without Fraternity Liberty would destroy equality and equality would destroy liberty. If in Democracy liberty does not destroy equality and equality does not destroy liberty, it is because at the basis of both there is fraternity. Fraternity is therefore the root of Democracy.

The foregoing discussion is merely a preliminary to the main question. That question is—wherein lie the roots of fraternity without which Democracy is not possible? Beyond dispute, it has its origin in Religion.

In examining the possibilities of the origin of Democracy or its functioning successfully one must go to the Religion of the people and ask—does it teach fraternity or does it not? If it does, the chances for a democratic Government are great. If it does not, the chances are poor. Of course other factors may affect the possibilities. But if fraternity is not there, there is nothing to built democracy on. Why did Democracy not grow in India? That is the main



question. The answer is quite simple. The Hindu Religion does not teach fraternity. Instead it teaches division of society into classes or varnas and the maintenance of separate class consciousness. In such a system where is the room for Democracy ?

The Hindu social system is undemocratic not by accident. It is designed to be undemocratic. Its division of society into *varnas* and castes, and of castes and outcastes are not theories but are decrees. They are all barricades raised against democracy.

From this it would appear that the doctrine of fraternity was unknown to the Hindu Religious and Philosophic thought. But such a conclusion would not be warranted by the facts of history. The Hindu Religious and Philosophic thought gave rise to an idea which had greater potentialities for producing social democracy *than* the idea of fraternity. It is the doctrine of Brahmaism\*.

It would not be surprising if some one asked what is this Brahmaism? It is something new even to Hindus. The Hindus are familiar with Vedanta. They are familiar with Brahmanism. But they are certainly not familiar with Brahmaism. Before proceeding further a few words of explanation are necessary.

There are three strands in the philosophic and religious thought of the Hindus. They may be designaged as (1) *Brahmaism* (2) *Vedanta* and (3) *Brahmanism*. Although they are correlated they stand for three different and distinct ideologies.

The essence of Brahmaism is summed up in a dogma which is stated in three different forms. They are (i) *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*— All this is Brahma. (ii) *Aham Brahmasmi*— Atmana (Self) is the same as Brahma.

Therefore I am Brahma. (iii) *Tattvamasi*— Atmana (Self) is the same as Brahma.

Therefore thou art also Brahma.

They are called Mahavakyas which means Great Sayings and they sum up the essence of Brahmaism.

The following are the dogmas which sum up the teachings of Vedant—

I Brahma is the only reality.

II The world is maya or unreal. III Jiva and Brahma are— (i) according to one school identical; (ii) according to another not identical but are elements of him and not separate from him;

(iii) according to the third school they are distinct and separate.

The creed of *Brahmanism* may be summed up in the following dogmas— (i) Belief in the chaturvarna. (ii) Sanctity and infallibility of the Vedas. (iii) Sacrifices to Gods the only way to salvation. Most people know the distinction between the Vedanta and Brahmanism and the points of controversy between

them. But very few people know the distinction between Brahmaism and Vedanta. Even Hindus are not aware of the doctrine of Brahmaism and the distinction between it and Vedanta. But the distinction is obvious. While Brahmaism and Vedanta agree that Atman is the same as Brahma. But the two differ in that Brahmaism does not treat the world as unreal, Vedanta does. This is the fundamental difference between the two.

The essence of Brahmaism is that the world is real and the reality behind the world is Brahma. Everything therefore is of the essence of Brahma.

There are two criticisms which have been levelled against Brahmaism. It is said that Brahmaism is piece of impudence. For a man to say " I am Brahma " is a kind of arrogance. The other criticism levelled against Brahmaism is the inability of man to know Brahma. 'I am Brahma' may appear to be impudence. But it can also be an assertion of one's own worth. In a world where humanity suffers so much from an inferiority complex such an assertion *on* the part of man is to be welcomed. Democracy demands that each individual shall have every opportunity for realizing its worth. It also requites that each individual shall know that he is as good as everybody else. Those who sneer at *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahma) as an impudent Utterance forget the other part of the *Maha Vakya* namely *Tatvamasi* (Thou art also Brahma). If *Aham Brahmasmi* has stood alone without the conjunct of *Tatvamasi* it may not have been possible to sneer at it. But with the conjunct of *Tatvanmsi* the charge of selfish arrogance cannot stand against Brahmaism.

It may well be that Brahma is unknowable. But all the same this theory of Brahma has certain social implications which have a tremendous value as a foundation for Democracy. If all persons are parts of Brahma then all are equal and all must enjoy the same liberty which is what Democracy means. Looked at from this point of view Brahma may be unknowable. But there cannot be slightest doubt that no doctrine could furnish a stronger foundation for Democracy than the doctrine of Brahma.

To support Democracy because we are all children of God is a very weak foundation for Democracy to rest on. That is why Democracy is so shaky wherever it made to rest on such a foundation. But to recognize and realize that you and I are parts of the same cosmic principle leaves room for no other theory of associated life except democracy. It does not merely preach Democracy. It makes democracy an obligation of one and all.

Western students of Democracy have spread the belief that Democracy has stemmed either from Christianity or from Plato and that there is no other source of inspiration for democracy. If they had known that India too had developed the doctrine of Brahmaism which furnishes a better foundation for Democracy they would not have been so dogmatic. India *too* must be

admitted to have a contribution towards a theoretical foundation for Democracy.

The question is what happened to this doctrine of Brahmaism? It is quite obvious that Brahmaism had no social effects. It was not made the basis of Dharma. When asked why this happened the answer is that Brahmaism is only philosophy, as though philosophy arises not out of social life but out of nothing and for nothing. Philosophy is no purely theoretic matter. It has practical potentialities. Philosophy has its roots in the problems of life and whatever theories philosophy propounds must return to society as instruments of re-constructing society. It is not enough to know. Those who know must endeavour to fulfil.

Why then Brahmaism failed to produce a new society? This is a great riddle. It is not that the Brahmins did not recognize the doctrine of Brahmaism. They did. But they did not ask how they could support inequality between the Brahmin and the Shudra, between man and woman, between casteman and outcaste ? But they did not. The result is that we have on the one hand the most democratic principle of Brahmaism and on the other hand a society infested with castes, subcastes, outcastes, primitive tribes and criminal tribes. Can there be a greater dilemma than this ? What is more ridiculous is the teaching of the Great Shankaracharya. For it was this Shankaracharya who taught that there is Brahma and this Brahma is real and that it pervades all and at the same time upheld all the inequities of the Brahmanic society. Only a lunatic could be happy with being the propounder of two such contradictions. Truly as the Brahmin is like a cow, he can eat anything and everything as the cow does and remain a Brahmin.

### **RIDDLE NO. 23**

#### **KALI YUGA—WHY HAVE THE BRAHMINS MADE IT UNENDING?**

If there is any notion widespread among the Hindus and understood by every man and woman adult or old, mature or immature it is that of the Kali Yuga. They are all aware of the fact that the present Yuga is Kali Yuga and that they are living in the Kali Yuga. The theory of Kali Yuga has a psychological effect upon the mind of the people. It means that it is an unpropitious age. It is an immoral age. It is therefore an age in which human effort will not bear any fruit. It is therefore necessary to inquire as to how such a notion arose. There are really four points which require elucidation. They are (1) What is Kali Yuga ?, (2) When did Kali Yuga begin ?, (3) When is the Kali Yuga to end ? and (4) Why such a notion was spread among the people.

To begin with the first point. For the purposes of this inquiry it is better to split the words Kali Yuga and consider them separately. What is meant by Yuga ? The word Yuga occurs in the Rig-Veda in the sense of age, generation or tribe as in the expressions *Yuge Yuge* (in every age), *Uttara Yugani* (future ages), *Uttare Yuge* (later ages) and *Purvani Yugani* (former ages) etc. It occurs in connection with Manushy, Manusha, Manushah in which case it denotes generations of men. It just meant ages. Various attempts are made to ascertain the period the Vaidikas intended to be covered by the term ' Yuga '. *Yuga* is derived from the Sanskrit root *Yuj* which means to join and may have had the same meaning as the astronomical term 'conjunction'.

***This chapter contains 45 typed pages. Only 9 pages of this chapter at the beginning are numbered. While no other pages are numbered. Howsoever the text of this chapter has been found to be complete and without any loss of material.—Ed.***

Prof. Weber suggests that the period of time known as *Yuga* was connected with four lunar phases.

Following this suggestion Mr. Rangacharya<sup>1</sup> has advanced the theory that " in all probability the earliest conception of a Yuga meant the period of a month from new-moon when the Sun and the Moon see each other i.e., they are in conjunction". This view is not accepted by others. For instance, according to Mr. Shamsastry the term Yuga is in the sense of a single human year as in the *Setumahatmya* which is said to form part of the *Skanda Purana*. According to the same authority it is used in the sense of a Parva or half a lunation, known as a white or dark half of a lunar month.

All these attempts do not help us to know what was the period which the Vaidikas intended to be covered by a Yuga.

While in the literature of the Vaidikas or theologians there is no exactitude regarding the use of the term Yuga in the literature of the astronomers (writers on Vedanga Jyotish) as distinguished from the Vaidikas the word Yuga connotes a definite period. According to them, a Yuga means a cycle of five years which are called (1) Samvatsara, (2) Parivatsara, (3) Idvatsara, (4) Anuvatsara and (5) Vatsara.

Coming to *Kali* it is one of the cycles made up of four *Yugas* : *Krita*, *Treta*, *Dwapar* and *Kali*. What is the origin of the term *Kali* ? The terms *Krita*, *Treta*, *Dwapar* and *Kali* are known to have been used .in the three different

connections. The earliest use of the term Kali as well as of other terms is connected with the game of dice.

From the Rig-Veda it appears that the dice piece that was used in the game was made of the brown fruit of the Vibhitaka tree being about the size of a nutmeg, nearly round with five slightly flattened sides. Later on the dice was made of four sides instead of five. Each side was marked with the different numerals 4, 3, 2 and 1. The side marked with 4 was called Krita, with 3 Treta, with 2 Dwapara and with 1 Kali. Shamsastry gives an account of how a game of dice formed part of sacrifice and how it was played. The following is his account<sup>3</sup>:

"Taking a cow belonging to the sacrificer, a number of players used to go along the streets of a town or village, and making the cow the stake, they used to play at dice in different batches with those who deposited grain as their stake. Each player used to throw on the ground a hundred or more Cowries (shells), and when the number of the Cowries thus cast and fallen with their face upwards or downwards, as agreed upon, was exactly divisible by four then the sacrificer was declared to have won: but if otherwise he was defeated. With the grain thus won, four Brahmans used to be fed on the day of sacrifice. "

Professor Egging's references to the Vedic literature leave no doubt about the prevalence of the game of dice almost from the earliest time. It is also clear from his references that the game was played with five dice four of which were called *Krita* while the fifth was called Kali. He also points out that there were various modes in which the game was played and says that according to the earliest mode of playing the game, if all the dice fell uniformly with the marked sides either upwards or downwards then the player won the game. The game of dice formed part of the Rajasuya and also of the sacrificial ceremony connected with the establishment of the sacred fire.

These terms—Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Kali—were also used in Mathematics. This is clear from the following passage from Abhayadevasuri's Commentary on Bhagvati Sutra a voluminous work on Jaina religion.

" In mathematical terminology an even number is called ' Yugma ', and an odd number ' Ojah '. Here there are, however, two numbers deserving of the name ' Yugma ' and two numbers deserving of the name 'Ojah'. Still, by the word 'Yugma' four Yugmas i.e., four numbers are meant. Of them i.e., Krita-yugma: Krita means accomplished, i.e., complete, for the reason that there is no other number after four, which bears a separate name (i.e., a name different from the four names Krita and others). That number which is not incomplete like Tryoja and other numbers, and which is a special even number is Kritayugma. As to Tryoja: that particular odd number which is

uneven from above a Kritiyugma is Tryoja. As the Dwaparayugma:—That number which is another even number like Kritiyugma, but different from it and which is measured by two from the beginning or from above a Kritiyugma is Dwaparayugma— Dvapara is a special grammatical word. As to Kalyoja:— That special uneven number which is odd by Kali, i.e., to a Kritayugma is called Kalyoja. That number etc. which even divided by four, ends in complete division, Kritiyugma. In the series of numbers, the number four, though it need not be divided by four because it is itself four, is also called Kritiyugma. " Shamshastry mentions another sense in which these terms are used.

According to him, they are used to mean the Parvas of those names, such as Krita Parva, Treta Parva, Dwapara Parva and Kali Parva. A Parva is a period of 15 tithis or days otherwise called Paksha. For reasons connected with religious ceremonies the exact time when a Parva closed was regarded as important. It was held that the Parvas fell into four classes according to the time of their closing. They were held to close either (1) at Sunrise, (2) at one quarter or Pada of the day, (3) after 2 quarters or Padas of the day or (4) at or after three quarters or Padas of the day. The first was called *Krita* Parva, the second *Treta* Parva, the third *Dwapara* Parva and the fourth *Kali* Parva.

Whatever the meaning in which the words *Kali* and *Yuga* were used at one time, the term *Kali Yuga* has long since been used to designate a unit in the Hindu system of reckoning time. According to the Hindus there is a cycle of time which consists of four Yugas of which the Kali Yuga forms one. The other Yugas are called *Krita*, *Treta* and *Dwapar*.

## II

When did the present Kali Yuga begin ? There are two different answers to the question.

According to the Aitereya Brahmana it began with Nabhanedishta son of Vaivasvata Manu. According to the Puranas it began on the death of Krishna after the battle of Mahabharata.

The first has been reduced to time term by Dr. Shamshastry' who says that Kali Yuga began in 3101 B.C. The second has been worked out by Mr. Gopal Aiyer with meticulous care. His view is that the Mahabharat War commenced on the 14th of October and ended on the night of 31st October 1194 B.C. He places the death of Krishna 16 years after the close of the war basing his conclusion on the ground that Parikshit was 16 when he was installed on the throne and reading it with the connected facts namely that the Pandavas went of Mahaprasthan immediately after installing Parikshit on the throne and this they did on the very day Krishna died. This gives 1177 B.C. as the date of the commencement of the Kali Yuga.

We have thus two different dates for the commencement of the Kali Yuga

3101 B.C. and 1177 B.C. This is the first riddle about the Kali Yuga. Two explanations are forthcoming for these two widely separated dates for the commencement of one and the same Yuga. One explanation is 3101 B.C. is the date of the commencement of the Kalpa and not of Kali and it was a mistake on the part of the copyist who misread Kalpa for Kali and brought about this confusion. The other explanation is that given by Dr. Shamshastri. According to him there were two Kali Yuga Eras which must be distinguished, one beginning in 3101 B.C. and another beginning in 1260 or 1240 B.C. The first lasted about 1840 or 1860 years and was lost.

### III

When is the Kali Yuga going to end ? On this question the view of the great Indian Astronomer Gargacharya in his *Siddhanta* when speaking of Salisuka Maurya the fourth in succession from Asoka makes the following important observation:

"Then the viciously valiant Greeks, after reducing Saketa, Panchala country to Mathura, will reach Kusumadhwa (Patna): Pushpapura being taken all provinces will undoubtedly be in disorder. The unconquerable Yavanas will not remain in the middle country. There will be cruel and dreadful war among themselves. Then after the destruction of the Greeks at the end of the Yuga, seven powerful Kings reign in Oudha. "

The important words are " after the destruction of the Greeks at the end of the Yuga". These words give rise to two questions (1) which Yuga Garga has in mind and (2) when did the defeat and destruction of the Greeks in India take place. Now the answers to these questions are not in doubt. By Yuga he means Kali Yuga and the destruction and defeat of the Greeks took place about 165 B.C. It is not mere matter of inference from facts. There are direct statements in chapters 188 and 190 of the Vanaparva of the Mahabharata that the Barbarian Sakas, Yavanas, Balhikas and many others will devastate Bharatvarsna ' *at the end of the Kali Yuga*".

The result which follows when the two statements are put together is that the Kali Yuga ended in 165 B.C. There is also another argument which supports this conclusion. According to the Mahabharata, Kali Yuga was to comprise a period of one thousand years. If we accept the statement that the Kali Yuga began in 1171 B.C. and deduct one thousand years since then we cannot escape the conclusion that Kali Yuga should have ended by about 171 B.C. which is not very far from the historical fact referred to by Garga as happening at the close of the Kali Yuga. There can therefore be no doubt that in the opinion of the chief Astronomer, Kali Yuga came to end by about 165 B.C. What is however the position? The position is that according to the

Vaidika Brahmaris Kali Yuga has not ended. It still continues. This is clear from the terms of *Sankalpa* which is a declaration which every Hindu makes even today before undertaking any religious ceremony. The Sankalpa is in the following terms:

"On the auspicious day and hour, in the second Parardha of First Bramha, which is called the Kalpa of the *White Boar*, in the period of *Vaivasvata* Manu, *in the Kali Yuga*, in the country of Jambudvipa in Bharatavarsha in the country of Bharat, in the luni-solar cycle of the sixty years which begins with Pradhava and ends with Kshaya or Akshaya and which is current, as ordained by Lord Vishnu, in the year (name), of the cycle, in the Southern or the Northern Ayana, as the case may be, in the white or dark half, on the Tithi. I (name) begin to perform the rite (name) the object of pleasing the Almighty. "

The question we have to consider is why and how the Vedic Brahmins manage to keep the *Kali Yuga* going on when the astronomer had said it was closed. The first thing to do is to ascertain what is the original period of the *Kali Yuga* ? According to the Vishnu Purana:

"The Kritayuga comprises 4000 years, the Treta 3000',the Dwapara 2000 and the Kali 1000. Thus those that know the past have declared. "

Thus Kali Yuga originally covered a period of 1000 years only. It is obvious that even on this reckoning the Kali Yuga should have ended long ago even according to the reckoning of the Vedic Brahmins. But it has not. What is the resason ? Obviously, because the period originally covered by the Kali Yuga came to be lengthened. This was done in two ways.

Firstly, it was done by adding two periods called Sandhya and Sandhyamsa before and after the commencement and the end of a Yuga. Authority for this can be found in the same passage of the Vishnu Purana already referred to and which reads as follows

"The period that precedes a Yuga is called *Sandhya*..... and the period which comes after a Yuga is called *Sandhyamsa*, which lasts for a like period. The intervals between these Sandhyas and Sandhyamsas are known as the Yugas called Krita, Treta and the like. "

What was the period of Sandhya and Sandhyamsa ? Was it uniform for all the Yugas or did it differ with the Yuga. Sandhya and Sandhyamsa periods were not uniform. They differed with each Yuga. The following table gives some idea of the four Yugas and their Sandhya and Sandhyamsa—

Unit of a Mahayuga Period

Yug	Period	Dawn	Twilight	Total
Krita	4000	400	400	4800
Treta	3000	300	300	3600
Dwapara	2000	200	200	2400



Kali	1000	100	100	1200
Maha Yuga				12000

Maha Yuga                      12000

The Kali Yuga instead of remaining as before a period of 1,000 years was lengthened to a period of 1,200 years by the addition of Sandhya and Sandhyamsa.

Secondly a new innovation was made. It was declared that the period fixed for the Yugas was really a period of divine years and not human years. According to the Vedic Brahmins one divine day was equal to one human year so that the period of Kali Yuga which was 1,000 years plus 200 years of Sandhya and Sandhamsa i.e. 1,200 years in all became (1200 x 360) equal to 4.32,000 years. In these two ways the Vedic Brahmins instead of declaring the end of Kali Yuga in 165 **B.C.** as the astronomer had said extended its life to 4.32,000 years. No wonder Kali Yuga continues even to-day and will continue for lakhs of years. There is no end to the Kali Yuga.

#### IV

What does the *Kali Yuga* stand for? The *kali Yuga* means an age of *adharma*, an age which is demoralized and an age in which the laws made by the King ought not to be obeyed. One question at once arises. Why was the Kali Yuga more demoralized than the preceding Yugas? What was the moral condition of the Aryans in the Yuga or Yugas preceding the present Kali Yuga? Anyone who compares the habits and social practices of the later Aryans with those of the ancient Aryans will find a tremendous improvement almost amounting to a social revolution in their manners and morals.

The religion of the Vedic Aryans was full of barbaric and obscene observances. Human sacrifice formed a part of their religion and was called Narmedhayagna. Most elaborate descriptions of the rite are found in the Yajur-Veda Samhita. Yajur-Veda Brahmanas, the Sankhyana and Vaitana Sutras. The worship of genitals or what is called Phallus worship was quite prevalent among the ancient Aryans. The cult of the phallus came to be known as Skambha and. 23 recognized as part of Aryan religion as may be seen in the hymn in Atharva-Veda X.7. Another instance of obscenity which disfigured the religion of the Ancient Aryans is connected with the Ashvamedha Yajna or the horse sacrifice. A necessary part of the Ashvamedha was the introduction of the *Sepas* (penis) of the Medha (dead

horse) into the Yoni (vagina) of the chief wife of the Yajamana (the sacrificer) accompanied by the recital of long series of Mantras by the Brahmin priests. A Mantra in the Vajasaneya Samhita (xxiii. 18) shows that there used to be a competition among the queens as to who was to receive this high honour of being served by the horse. Those who want to know more about it will find it in the commentary of Mahidhara on the Yajur-Veda where he gives full description of the details of this obscene rite which had formed a part of the Aryan religion.

The morals of the Ancient Aryans were no better than their religion. The Aryans were a race of gamblers. Gambling was developed by them into a science in very early days of the Aryan civilization so much so that they had even devised the dice and given them certain technical terms. The luckiest dice was called Krit and the unluckiest was called Kali. Treta and Dwapara were intermediate between them. Not only was gambling well developed among the ancient Aryans but they did not play without stakes. They gambled with such abandon that there is really no comparison with their spirit of gambling. Kingdoms and even wives were offered as stakes at gambling. King Nala staked his kingdom and lost it. The Pandvas went much beyond. They not only staked their kingdom but they also staked their wife, Draupadi, and lost both. Among the Aryans gambling was not the game of the rich. It was a vice of the many.

The ancient Aryans were also a race of drunkards. Wine formed a most essential part of their religion. The Vedic Gods drank wine. The divine wine was called Soma. Since the Gods of the Aryans drank wine the Aryans had no scruples in the matter of drinking. Indeed to drink it was a part of an Aryan's religious duty. There were so many Soma sacrifices among the ancient Aryans that there were hardly any days when Soma was not drunk. Soma was restricted to only the three upper classes, namely, the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas. That does not mean the Shudras were abstainers. Those who were denied Soma drank Sura which was ordinary, unconsecrated wine sold in the market. Not only the Male Aryans were addicted to drinking but the females also indulged in drinking. The Kaushitaki Grihya Sutra 1.11.12 advises that four or eight women who are not widowed after having been regaled with wine and food should be called to dance for four times on the night previous to the wedding ceremony. This habit of drinking intoxicating liquor was not confined to the Non-Brahmin women. Even Brahmin women were addicted to it. Drinking was not regarded as a sin. It was not even a vice, it was quite a respectable practice. The Rig-Veda says:

"Worshipping the Sun before drinking Madira (wine)." The Yajur-Veda says:

" Oh, Deva Soma! being strengthened and invigorated by Sura (wine), by thy pure spirit please the Devas; give juicy food to the sacrificer and vigour to Brahmanas and Kshatriyas." The Mantra Brahmana says:

" By which women have been made enjoyable by men, and by which water has been transformed into wine (for the enjoyment of men), etc."

That Rama and Sita both drank wine is admitted by the Ramayana. Utter Khand says:

" Like Indra in the case of (his wife) Shachi, Rama Chandra made Sita drink purified honey made wine. Servants brought for Rama Chandra meat and sweet fruits."

4

So did Krishna and Arjuna. In the Udyoga Parva of the Mahabharat Sanjaya says:

"Arjuna and Shri Krishna drinking wine made from honey and being sweet-scented and garlanded, wearing splendid clothes and ornaments, sat on a golden throne studded with various jewels. I saw Shrikrishna's feet on Arjuna's lap, and Arjuna's feet on Draupadi and Satyabhama's lap."

We may next proceed to consider the marital relations of men and women. What does history say ? In the beginning there was no law of marriage among the Aryans. It was a state of complete promiscuity both in the higher and lower classes of the society. There was no such thing as a question of prohibited degrees as the following instances will show.

*Brahma* married his own daughter *Satarupa*. Their son was Manu the founder of the Pruthu dynasty which preceded the rise of the *Aiksvakas* and the *Ailas*.

Hiranyakashpu married his daughter Rohini. Other cases of father marrying daughters are Vashishtha and Shatrupa, Janhu and Jannhavi, and Surya and U.sha. That such marriages between father and daughters were common is indicated by the usage of recognizing *Kanin* sons. Kanin sons mean sons born to unmarried daughter. They were *in law* the sons of the father of the girl. Obviously they must be sons begotten by the father on his own daughter

There are cases of father and son cohabiting with the same woman, Brahma is the father of Manu and Satarupa is his mother. This Satarupa is also the wife of Manu. Another case is that of *Shradha*. She is the wife of Vivasvat. Their son is Manu. But Shradha is also the wife of Manu thus indicating the practice of father and son sharing a woman. It was open for a person to marry his brother's daughter. Dharma married 10 daughters of Daksha though Daksha and Dharma were brothers. One could also marry his uncle's daughter as did Kasyapa who married 13 wives all of whom were the daughters of Daksha and Daksha was the brother of Kasyapa's father

Marichi.

The case of Yama and Yami mentioned in the Rig-Veda is a notorious case, which throws a great deal of light on the question of marriages between brothers and sisters. Because Yama refused to cohabit with Yami it must not be supposed that such marriages did not exist.

The Adi Parva of the Mahabharata gives a genealogy which begins from Brahmadeva. According to this genealogy Brahma had three sons Marichi, Daksha and Dharma and one daughter whose name the genealogy unfortunately does not give. In this very genealogy it is stated that Daksha married the daughter of Brahma who was his sister and had a vast number of daughters variously estimated as being between 50 and 60. Other instances of marriages between brothers and sisters could be cited. They are Pushan and his sister Acchoda and Amavasu. Purukutsa and Narmada, Viprachiti and Simhika, Nahusa and Viraja, Sukra-Usanas and Go, Amsumat and Yasoda, Dasaratha and Kausalya, Rama and Sita; Suka and Pivari; Draupadi and Prasti are all cases of brothers marrying sisters.

The following cases show that there was no prohibition against son cohabiting with his mother. There is the case of Pushan and his mother Manu and Satrupa and Manu and Shradha. Attention may also be drawn to two other cases, Arjuna and Urvashi and Arjuna and Uttara. Uttara was married to Abhimanyu son of Arjuna when he was barely 16. Uttara was associated with Arjuna. He taught her music and dancing. Uttara is described as being in love with Arjuna and the Mahabharata speaks of their getting married as a natural sequel to their love affair. The Mahabharata does not say that they were actually married but if they were, then Abhimanyu can be said to have married his mother. The Arjuna Urvashi episode is more positive in its indication.

Indra was the real father of Arjuna. Urvashi was the mistress of Indra and therefore in the position of a mother to Arjuna. She was a tutor to Arjuna and taught him music and dancing. Urvashi became enamoured of Arjuna and with the consent of his father, Indra, approached Arjuna for sexual intercourse. Arjuna refused to agree on the ground that she was like mother to him. Urvashi's conduct has historically more significance than Arjuna's denial and for two reasons. The very request by Urvashi to Arjuna and the consent by Indra show that Urvashi was following a well established practice. Secondly, Urvashi in her reply to Arjuna tells him in a pointed manner that this was a well recognized custom and that all Arjuna's forefathers had accepted precisely similar invitations without any guilt being attached to them.

Nothing illustrates better than the complete disregard of consanguinity in cohabitation in ancient India than the following story which is related in the

second Adhyaya of the Harivamsha. According to it Soma was the son of ten fathers—suggesting the existence of Polyandry—each one of whom was called Pralheta. Soma had a daughter *Marisha*—The ten fathers of *Soma* and *Soma* himself cohabited with *Marisha*. This is a case of ten grand-fathers and father married to a woman who was a grand-daughter and daughter to her husbands. In the same Adhyaya the story of Daksha Prajapati is told. This Daksha Prajapati who is the son of Soma is said to have given his 27 daughters to his father, Soma for procreation. In the third Adhyaya of Harivamsha the author says that Daksha gave his daughter in marriage to his own father Brahma on whom Brahma begot a son who became famous as Narada. All these are cases of cohabitation of Sapinda men, with Sapinda women.

The ancient Aryan women were sold. The sale of daughters is evidenced by the Arsha form of marriage. According to the technical terms used the father of the boy gave *Go-Mithuna* and took the girl. This is another way of saying that the girl was sold for a *Go-Mithuna*. *Go-Mithuna* means one cow and one bull which was regarded as a reasonable price of a girl. Not only daughters were sold by their fathers but wives also were sold by their husbands. The Harivamsha in its 79th Adhyaya describes how a religious rite called *Punyaka-Vrata* should be the fee that should be offered to the officiating priest. It says that the wives of Brahmins should be purchased from their husbands and given to the officiating priest as his fee. It is quite obvious from this that Brahmins freely sold their wives for a consideration.

That the ancient Aryans let their women on rent for cohabitation to others is also a fact. In the Mahabharata there is an account of the life of Madhavi in Adhyayas 103 to 123. According to this account Madhavi was the daughter of King Yayati. Yayati made a gift of her to Galva. Galva who was a Rishi as a fee to a priest. Galva rented her

out to three kings in succession but to each for a period necessary to beget a son on her. After the tenancy of the third king terminated Madhavi was surrendered by Galva to his Guru Vishvamitra who made her his wife. Vishvamitra kept her till he begot a son on her and gave her back to Galva. Galva returned her to her father Yayati.

Polygamy and Polyandry were raging in the ancient Aryan society. The fact is so well known that it is unnecessary to record cases which show its existence. But what is probably not well known is the fact of promiscuity. Promiscuity in matters of sex becomes quite apparent if one were only to examine the rules of *Niyoga* which the Aryan name for a system under which a woman who is wedded can beget on herself a progeny from another who is not her husband. This system resulted in a complete state of promiscuity for it

was uncontrolled. In the first place, there was no limit to the number of Niyogas open to a woman. Madhuti had one Niyoga allowed to her. Ambika had one actual Niyoga and another proposed. Saradandayani had three. Pandu allowed his wife Kunti four Niyogas. Vyusistasva was permitted to have 7 and Vali is known to have allowed as many as 17 Niyogas, 11 on one and 6 on his second wife. Just as there was no limit to the number of Niyogas so also there was no definition of cases in which Niyoga was permissible. Niyoga took place in the lifetime of the husband and even in cases where the husband was not overcome by any congenital incapacity to procreate. The initiative was probably taken by the wife. The choice of a man was left to her. She was free to find out with whom she would unite a Niyoga and how many times, if she chose the same man. The Niyogas were another name for illicit intercourse between men and women which might last for one night or twelve years or more with the husband a willing and a sleeping partner in this trade of fornication.

These were the manners and morals of common men in the ancient Aryan Society. What were the morals of the Brahmins? Truth to tell they were no better men than those of the common men. The looseness of the morals among the Brahmins is evidenced by many instances. But a few will suffice. The cases showing that the Brahmins used to sell their wives has already been referred to. I will give other cases showing looseness. The Utanka is a pupil of Veda (the Purohita of Janmejaya III). The wife of Veda most calmly requests Utanka to take the place of her husband and 'approach' her for the sake of virtue. Another case that may be referred to in this connection is that of Uddalaka's wife. She is free to go to other Brahmins either of her own free will, or in response to invitations. Shwetketu is her son by one of her husband's pupils. These are not mere instances of laxity or adultery. These are cases of recognized latitudes allowed to Brahmin women. Jatila-Gautami' was a Brahmin woman and had 7 husbands who were Rishis. The Mahabharata says that the wives of the citizens admire Draupadi in the company of her five husbands and compare her to Jatila Gautami with her seven husbands. *Mamata* is the wife of *Utathya*. But Brahaspati the brother of Utathya had free access to Mamata during the life time of Utathya. The only objection Mamata once raises to him is to ask him to wait on account of her pregnancy but does not say that approaches to her were either improper or unlawful.

Such immoralities were so common among the Brahmins that Draupadi when she was called a cow by Duryodhana for her polyandry is said to have said she was sorry that her husbands were not born as Brahmins.

Let us examine the morality of the rishis. What do we find? The first thing

we find is the prevalence of bestiality among the rishis. Take the case of the rishi called *Vibhandaka*. In Adhyaya 100 of the Vana Parva of the Mahabharata it is stated that he cohabited with a female deer and that the female deer bore a son to him who subsequently became known as Rishi Shringa. In Adhyaya 1 as well as in 118 of the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata there is a narration of how Pandu the father of the Pandavas received his curse from the Rishi by name Dama. Vyas says that the Rishi Dama was once engaged in the act of coitus with a female deer in a jungle. While so engaged Pandu shot him with an arrow before the rishi was spent as a result of it Dama died. But before he died Dama uttered a curse saying that if Pandu ever thought of approaching his wife he would die instantly. Vyas tries to gloss this bestiality of the rishi by saying that the Rishi and his wife had both taken the form of deer in fun and frolic. Other instances of such bestiality by the rishis it will not be difficult to find if a diligent search was made in the ancient religious literature in India.

Another heinous practice which is associated with the rishis is cohabitation with women in the open and within the sight of the public. In Adhyaya 63 of the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata a description is given of how the Rishi Parashara had sexual intercourse with Satyavati, alias Matsya Gandha a fisherman's girl. Vyas says that he cohabited with her in the open and in public. Another similar instance is to be found in Adhyaya 104 of the Adi Parva. It is stated therein that the Rishi Dirgha Tama cohabited with a woman in the sight of the public. There are many such instances mentioned in the Mahabharata. There is, however, no need to encumber the record with them. For the word *Ayonija* is enough to prove the general existence of the practice. Most Hindus know that Sita, Draupadi and other renowned ladies are spoken of *Ayonija*. What they mean by *Ayonija* is a child born by immaculate conception. There is however no warrant from etymological point of view to give such a meaning to the Ayoni. The root meaning of the word Yoni is house. *Yonija* means a child born or conceived in the house. *Ayonija* means a child born or conceived outside the house. If this is the correct etymology of *Ayonija* it testifies to the practice of indulging in sexual intercourse in the open within the sight of the public.

Another practice which evidences the revolting immorality of the rishis in the Chandhyogya Upanishad. According to this Upanishad it appears that the rishis had made a rule that if while they were engaged in performing a *Yajna* if a woman expressed a desire for sexual intercourse with the rishi who was approached should immediately without waiting for the completion of the *Yajna* and without caring to retire in a secluded spot proceeded to commit sexual intercourse with her in the *Yajna* Mandap and in the sight of the public.

This immoral performance of the rishi was elevated to the position of a Religious observance and given the technical name of *Vamadev- Vrata* which was later on revived as *Vama- Marga*.

This does not exhaust all that one finds in the ancient sacredotal literature of the Aryans about the morality of the rishis. One phase of their moral life remains to be mentioned.

The ancient Aryans also seem to be possessed with the desire to have better progeny which they accomplished by sending their wives to others and it was mostly to the rishis who were regarded by the Aryas as pedigree cattle. The number of rishis who figure in such cases form quite a formidable number. Indeed the rishis seemed to have made a regular trade in this kind of immorality and they were so lucky that even kings asked them to impregnate the queens. Let us now take the Devas.

The Devas were a powerful and most licentious community. They even molested the wives of the rishis. The story of how Indra raped Ahalya the wife of Rishi Gautama is well known. But the immoralities they committed on the Aryan women were unspeakable. The Devas as a community appears to have established an overlordship over the Aryan community in very early times. This overlordship had become degenerated that the Aryan women had to prostitute themselves to satisfy the lust of the Devas. The Aryans took pride if his wife was in the keeping of a Deva and was impregnated by him. The mention is in the Mahabharata and in the Harivamsha of sons born to Arya women from Indra. Yama, Nasatya, Agni, Vayu and other Devas is so frequent that one is astounded to note the scale on which such illicit intercourse between the Devas and the Arya women was going on.

In course of time the relations between the Devas and the Aryans became stablized and appears to have taken the form of feudalism. The Devas exacted two boons' from the Aryans.

The first boon was the *Yajna* which were periodic feasts given by the Aryans to the Devas in return for the protection of the Devas in their fight against the Rakshasas, Daityas and Danavas. The Yajnas were nothing but feudal exactions of the Devas. If they have not been so understood it is largely because the word Deva instead of thought to be the name of a community is regarded as a term for expressing the idea of God which is quite wrong at any rate in the early stages of Aryan Society.

The second boon claimed by the Devas against the Aryans was the prior right to enjoy Aryan woman. This was systematized at a very early date. There is a mention of it in the Rig-Veda in X. 85.40. According to it the first right over an Arya female was that of Soma second of Gandharva, third of Agni and lastly of the Aryan. Every Aryan woman was hypothecated to some



Deva who had a right to enjoy her first on becoming puber. Before she could be married to an Aryan she had to be redeemed by getting the right of the Deva extinguished by making him a proper payment. The description of the marriage ceremony given in the 7th Khandika of the 1st Adhyaya of the Ashvalayan Grahya Sutra furnish the most cogent proof of the existence of the system. A careful and critical examination of the Sutra reveals that at the marriage three Devas were present, *Aryaman*, *Varuna* and *Pushan*, obviously because they had a right of prelibation over the bride. The first thing that the bride-groom does, is to bring her near a stone slab and make her stand on it telling her 'Tread on this stone, like a stone be firm. Overcome the enemies; tread the foes down '. This means that the bridegroom does it to liberate the bride from the physical control of the three Devas whom he regards as his enemies. The Devas get angry and march on the bridegroom. The brother of the bride intervenes and tries to settle the dispute. He brings parched gram with a view to offer it the Angry Deva with a view to buy off their rights over the bride. The brother then asks the bride to join her palms and make a hollow. He then fills the hollow of her palm with the parched grain and pours clarified butter on it and asks her to offer it to each Deva three times. This offering is called *Avadana*. While the bride is making this *Avadana* to the Deva the brother of the bride utters a statement which is very significant. He says " This girl is making this *Avadana* to *Aryaman* Deva through *Agni*. *Aryaman* should therefore relinquish his right over the girl and should not disturb the possession of the bridegroom ". Separate *Avadanas* are made by the bride to the other two Devas and in their case also the brother alters the same formula. After the *Avadan* follows the *Pradakshana* round the *Agni* which is called *SAPTAPADI* after which the marriage of the bride and bridegroom becomes complete valid and good. All this of course is very illuminating and throw a flood of light on the utter subjection of the Aryans to the Devas and moral degradation of Devas as well as of the Aryans.

Lawyers know that *Saptapadi* is the most essential ceremony in a Hindu marriage and that without it there is no marriage at Law. But very few know why *Saptapadi* has so great an importance. The reason is quite obvious. It is a test whether the Deva who had his right of prelibation over the bride was satisfied with the *Avadana* and was prepared to release her. If the Deva allowed the bridegroom to take the bride away with him up to a distance covered by the *Saptapadi* it raised an irrebutable presumption that the Deva was satisfied with the compensation and that his right was extinguished and the girl was free to be the wife of another. The *Saptapadi* cannot have any other meaning. The fact that *Saptapadi* is necessary in every marriage shows how universally prevalent this kind of immorality had been among the Devas

and the Aryans.

This survey cannot be complete without separate reference to the morals of Krishna. Since the beginning of Kali Yuga which is the same thing is associated with his death his morals became of considerable importance. How do the morals of Krishna compare with those of the others? Full details are given in another place about the sort of life Krishna led. To that I will add here a few. Krishna belonged to the Vrasni (Yadava family). The Yadavas were polygamous. The Yadava Kings are reported to have innumerable wives and innumerable sons— a stain from which Krishna himself was not free. But this Yadava family and Krishna's own house was not free from the stain of parental incest. The case of a father marrying daughter is reported by the Matsya Purana to have occurred in the Yadav family. According to Matsya Purana, King Taittiri an ancestor of Krishna married his own daughter and begot on her a son ,by name Nala. The case of a son cohabiting with his mother is found in the conduct of *Samba* the son of Krishna. The Matsya Purana tells how Samba lived an illicit life with the wives of Krishna his father and how Krishna got angry and cursed Samba and the guilty wives on that account. There is a reference to this in the Mahabharata also. Satyabhama asked Draupadi the secret of her power over her five husbands. According to the Mahabharata Draupadi warned her against talking or staying in private with her step-sons. This corroborates what the Matsya Purana has to say about *Samba*. Sarnba's is not the only case. His brother Pradyumna married his foster mother *Mayavati* the wife of Sambara.

Such is the state of morals in the Aryan Society before the death of Krishna. It is not possible to divide this history into definite Yugas and to say that what state of morals existed in the Krita, what in Treta and what in Dwapara Yuga which closed at the death of Krishna If, however, we allow the ancient Aryans a spirit of progressive reform it is possible to say that the worst cases of immorality occurred in earliest age i.e. the Krita age, the less revolting in the Treta and the least revolting in the Dwapara and the best in the Kali age.

This line of thinking does not rest upon mere general development of human society as we see all over the world. That instead of undergoing a moral decay the ancient Aryan society was engaged in removing social evils by undertaking bold reforms is borne out by its story.

Devas and the rishis occupied a very high place in the eyes of the common Aryan and as is usual the inferior always imitate their superior. What the superior class does forms a standard for the inferior. The immoralities which were prevalent in the Aryan Society were largely the result of the imitation by the common man of the immoral acts and deeds of the Devas and the rishis. To stop the spread of immoralities in society the leaders of the Aryan Society

introduced a reform of the greatest significance. They declared that acts and deeds of the Devas and the rishis are not to be cited or treated as precedents. In this way one cause and source of immorality was removed by a bold and courageous stroke.

Other reforms were equally drastic. The Mahabharata refers to two reformers Dirghatama and Shwetaketu. It was laid down by Shwetketu that the marriage is indissoluble and there was to be no divorce. Two reforms are attributed to Dirghatama. He stopped polyandry and declared that a woman can have only one husband at a time. The second reform he is said to have carried out. was to lay down conditions for regulating Niyog. The following were the most important of these conditions.

(i) The father or brother of the widow (or of the widow's husband) shall assemble the Gurus who taught or sacrificed for the deceased husband and his relatives and shall appoint her to raise issue for the deceased husband.

(ii) (1) The husband, whether living or dead, must have no sons; (2) The Gurus in a family council should decide to appoint the widow to raise issue for her husband, (3) The person appointed must be either the husband's brother or a sapinda, or sagotra of the husband or (according to Gautama) a sapravara or a person of the same caste. (4) The person appointed and the widow must be actuated by no lust but only by a sense of duty; (5) The person appointed must be anointed with ghee or oil (Narada Stripurna, 82) must not speak with or kiss her or engage in the sportive dalliance with the women; (6) This relationship was to last till one son was born (or two according to some); (7) The widow must be comparatively young, she should not be old or sterile, or past child-bearing or sickly or unwilling or pregnant (Baud. Dh. S. II. 2.70, Narad, Stripumsa 83.84); (8) After the birth of a son they were to regard themselves as father-in-law and daughter-in-law (Manu IX, 62). It is further made clear by the texts that if a brother-in-law has intercourse with his sister-in-law without appointment by elders or if he does so even when appointed by elders but the other circumstances do not exist (e.g., if the husband has a son), he would be guilty of the sin of incest."

There are other reforms carried out by the ancient Aryan Society necessary to improve its morals. One was to establish the rule of prohibited degrees for purposes of marriage to prevent recurrence of father-daughter, brother-sister, mother-son, grandfather-grand daughter marriages. The other was to declare sexual intercourse between the wife of the Guru and the pupil a heinous sin. Equally clear is the evidence in support of an attempt to control gambling. Every treatise in the series called Dharma Sutras contain references to laws made throwing on the King the duty and urgency of controlling gambling by State authorities under stringent laws.

All these reforms had taken effect long before the Kali Yuga started and it is natural to hold that from the point of view of morality the Kali Yuga was a better age. To call it an age in which morals were declining is not only without foundation but is an utter perversion.

This discussion about the Kali Yuga raised many riddles in the first place. How and when did the idea of mahayuga arise? It is true that all over the world the idea of a golden age lying in the past has been prevalent. But the idea of a Mahayuga is quite satisfied with the idea of a golden past prevalent elsewhere in India. Elsewhere the golden past is deemed to return. It is gone for ever. But in the idea of the Mahayuga the golden past is not gone for ever. It is to return after the cycle is complete.

The second riddle is why was the Kali Yuga not closed in 165 B.C. When according to the astronomer it was due to end why was it continued. Third riddle is the addition of Sandhya and Sandhyamsa periods to the *Kali Yuga*. It is quite obvious that these were later additions. For the Vishnu Purana states them separately. If they were original parts of Kali Yuga they would not have been stated separately why were these additions made. A fourth riddle is the change in the counting of the period. Originally the period of the Kali Yuga was said to be human years. Subsequently it was said to be a period of divine years with the result of the Kali Yuga being confined to 1200 years became extended to 4,32,000 years. That this was an innovation is quite obvious. For the Mahabharata knows nothing about this calculation in term of divine years. Why was this innovation made? What was the object of the Vedic Brahmins in thus indefinitely extending the period of the Kali Yuga? Was it to blackmail some Shudra Kings that the theory of Kali Yuga was invented and made unending so as to destroy his subjects from having any faith in his rule?

## RIDDLE NO. 24

### THE RIDDLE OF THE KALI YUGA

The Units into which time is broken up for the purposes of reckoning it which are prevalent among the Hindus have not deserved the attention which their extraordinary character call for. This is a matter which forms one of the principal subject matter of the Puranas. There are according to the Puranas five measures of time (1) Varsha, (2) Yuga, (3) Maha Yuga, (4) Manwantara and (5) Kalpa. I will draw upon the Vishnu Purana to show what these units are.

To begin with the Varsha. This is how the Vishnu Purana explains it:

" Oh best of sages, fifteen twinklings of the eye make a *Kashtha*; thirty

Kalas, one

*Muhurttā*; thirty Muhurttas constitute a day and night of mortals: thirty such days make a month, divided into two half-months: six months form an *Ayana* (the period of the Sun's progress north or south of the ecliptic): and two *Ayanas* compose a year."

The same is explained in greater details at another place in the Vishnu Purana

" Fifteen twinklings of the eye (*Nimedhas*) make a *Kashtha*', thirty *Kashthas*, a *Kala*; Thirty *Kalas*, a *Muhurttā* (forty-eighty minutes); and thirty Muhurttas, a day and night; the portions of the day are longer or shorter, as has been explained; but the *Sandhya* is always the same in increase or decrease, being only one Muhurttā. From the period that a line may be drawn across the Sun (or that half his orb is visible) to the expiration of three Muhurttas (two hours and twenty-four minutes), that interval is called *Pratar* (morning), forming a fifth portion of the day.

***(This is another version entitled ' The Riddle of the Kali Yuga '. The copy available with us is a carbon copy having no corrections or modifications by the author. This chapter contains 40 pages.—Ed.)***

The next portion, or three Muhurttas from morning, is termed *Sangava* (forenoon): the three next Muhurttas constitute mid-day; the afternoon comprises the next three Muhurttas; the three Muhurttas following are considered as the evening; and the fifteen Muhurttas of the day are thus classed in five portions of three each."

"Fifteen days of thirty Muhurttas each are called a *Paksha* (a lunar fortnight); two of these make a month; and two months, a solar season; three seasons a northern or southern declination (*Ayana*)', and those two compose a year."

The conception of Yuga is explained by the Vishnu Purana in the following terms: " Twelve thousand divine years, each composed of (three hundred and sixty) such days, constitute the period of the four Yugas, or ages. They are thus distributed: the Krita age has four thousand divine years; the Treta three thousand; the Dwapara two thousand; and Kali age one thousand; so those acquainted with antiquity have declared.

" The period that precedes a Yuga is called a *Sandhya*, and it is of as many hundred years as there are thousand in the Yuga; and the period that follows a Yuga, termed the *Sandhyansa*, is of similar duration. The interval between the *Sandhya* and the *Sandhyasana* is the Yuga, denominated, Krita, Treta, &c."

The term Yuga is also used by the Vishnu Purana to denote a different measure of time.

It says:

**" Years, made up of four kinds of months, are distinguished into five kinds; and an aggregate of all the varieties of time is termed a Yuga, or cycle. The years are severally, called Samvatsara, Idvatsara, Anuvatsara, Parivatsara, and Vatsara.- This is the time called a Yuga."**

The measure of Maha Yuga is an extension of the Yuga. As the Vishnu Purana points out:

"The Krita, Treta, Dwapara, and Kali constitute a great age, or aggregate of four ages: a thousand such aggregates are a day of Brahma,"

The Manwantara is explained by the Vishnu Purana in the following terms:

"The interval, called a Manwantara, is equal to seventy-one times, the number of years contained in the four Yugas, with some additional years."

What is Kalpa is stated by the Vishnu Purana in the following brief text:

" Kalpa (or the day) of Brahma."

These are the periods in which time is divided. The time included in these periods may next be noted. The *Varsha* is simple enough. It is the same as the year or a period of 365 days. The Yuga, Maha Yuga, Manwantara and Kalpa are not so simple for calculating the periods. It would be easier to treat Yuga, Maha Yuga etc., as sub-divisions of a Kalpa rather than treat the Kalpa as a multiple of Yuga.

Proceeding along that line the relation between a Kalpa and a Maha Yuga is that in one Kalpa there are 71 Maha Yugas while one Maha Yuga consists of four Yugas and a Manwantara is equal to 71 Maha Yugas with some additional years.

In computing the periods covered by these units we cannot take Yuga as our base for computation. For the Yuga is a fixed but not uniform period. The basis of computation is the Maha Yuga which consists of a fixed period.

A Maha Yuga consists of a period of four Yugas called (1) Krita, (2) Treta, (3) Dwapara and (4) Kali. Each Yuga has its period fixed. Each Yuga in addition to its period has a dawn and a twilight which have fixed duration. Actual period as well as the period of the dawn and the twilight are different for the different Yugas.

Yug	Period	Dawn	Twilight	Total
Krita	4000	400	400	4800
Treta	3000	300	300	3600
Dwapara	2000	200	200	2400
Kali	1000	100	100	1200

Maha Yuga				12000
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This computation of the Maha Yuga is in terms of divine years i.e. 12000 divine years or years of Brahma make up one Maha Yuga at the rate of one year of men being equal to one divine day the Maha Yuga in terms of human or mortal years comes to  $(360 \div 12000) \times 43,20,000$  years.

Seventy-one Maha Yugas make one Kalpa. This means that a Kalpa is equal to  $(43,20,000 \times 71)$  3,06,72,000.

Coming to Manwantaras one Manvantara is equal to 71 Maha Yugas plus something more. The period of a manvantara is equal to that of a Kalpa i.e. 3,06,72,000 *plus* something more. The period of a Manvantara is bigger than the period included in a Kalpa. The conception of a *Varsha* is in accord with astronomy and is necessary for the purpose of calculating time. The conception of a Kalpa is both mythological and cosmological and is based upon the belief that the Universe undergoes the process of creation and dissolution at the hands of Brahma and the period between creation and dissolution is called Kalpa. The first book of the Vishnu Purana is occupied with this. It begins with the details of creation.

Creation is of twofold character, (1) primary (sarga) i.e. the origin of the universe from Prakriti or eternal crude matter; (2) Secondary (Pratisarga) i.e. the manner in which forms of things are developed from elementary substances previously evolved, or the manner in which they reappear after their temporary destruction. Both these creations are periodical, but the termination of the first occurs only at the end of the life of Brahma, when not only all the Gods and all other forms are annihilated, but the elements are again merged into primary substance, besides which one only spiritual being exists; the later takes place at the end of every Kalpa or day of Brahma, and affects only the forms of inferior creatures, and lower worlds, leaving the substance of the universe entire, and sages and Gods unharmed.

Such is the conception underlying Kalpa.

The conception underlying Manvantara is mythological if not historical. It starts with the belief that Brahma gave rise to creation, inanimate as well as animate. But the animates did not multiply themselves. Brahma then created other 9 mind born sons but they were without desire or passion, inspired with holy wisdom, estranged from the universe, and undesirous of progeny. Brahma having perceived this was filled with wrath. Brahma then converted himself into two persons, the first male, or Manu Swayambhuva and the first woman, or Satarupa. Manu Swayambhuva married Satarupa. Thus began the first Manvantara which is called Manvantara Swayambhuva. The fourteen Manvantaras are described as follows<sup>1</sup> "Then, Brahma created himself the

Manu Swayambhuva, born of, and identical with, -his original self, for the protection of created beings, and the female portion of himself he constituted Satarupa, whom austerity purified from the sin (of forbidden nuptials), and whom the divine Manu Swayambhuva took to wife. From these two were born two sons, Priyavrata and Uttanapada, and two daughters, named Prasuti and Akuti graced with loveliness and exalted merit. Prasuti he gave to Daksha, after giving Akuti to the Patriarch Ruchi, who espoused her. Akuti bore to Ruchi twins, Yajna and Dakshina, who afterwards became husband and wife, and had twelve sons, the deities called Yamas, in the Manwantara of Swayambhuva."

"The first Manu was Swayambhuva, then came Swarochisha, the Auttami, then Tamasa, then Raivata, then Chakshusha: these six Manus have passed away. The Manu who presides over the seventh Manwantara, which is the present period, is Vaivaswata, the son of the Sun."

"The period of Swayambhuva Manu, in the beginning of the Kalpa, has already been described by me, together with the gods, Rishis, and other personages, who then flourished. I will now, therefore, enumerate the presiding gods, Rishis, and sons of the Manu, *in the Manwantara of Swarochisha*. The deities of this period (or the second Manvantara) were the classes called Paravatas and Tushitas; and the king of the gods was the mighty Vipaschit. The seven Rishis were Urja, Stambha, Prana, Dattoli, Rishabha, Nischara, and Arvarivat; and Chaitra, Kimpurusha and others, were the Manu's sons.

" In the *third period*, or Manwantara of Auttami, Susanti was the Indra, the king of the gods the orders of whom were the Sudhamas, Satyas, Sivas, Pradersanas, and Vasavertis; each of the five orders consisting of twelve divinities. The seven sons of Vasishtha were the seven Rishis; and Aja, Parasu, Divya and others, were the sons of the Manu.

"The Surupas, Haris, Satyas, and Sudhis were the classes of gods, each comprising twenty-seven, in the period of Tamasa, the *fourth Manu*. Sivi was the Indra, also designated by his performance of a hundred sacrifices (or named Satakratu). The seven Rishis were Jyotirdhama, Prithu, Kavya, Chaitra, Agni, Vanaka, and Pivara. The sons of Tamasa were the mighty kings Nara, Khyati, Santahaya, Janujangha, and others."

" In the *fifth interval* the Manu was Raivata; the Indra was vibhu: the classes of gods, consisting of fourteen each, were the Amitabhas, Abhutarajasas, Vaikunthas, and Sumedhasas; the seven Rishis were Hiranyaroma, Vedasri, Urdohabahu, Vedabahu, Sudhaman, Parjanya and Mahamuni: the sons of Raivata were Balabandhu Susambhavya, Satyaka, and other valiant kings."



"These four Manus, Swarochisha, Auttami, Tamasa, and Raivata, were all descended from Priyavrata, who in consequence of propitiating Vishnu by his devotions, obtained these rulers of the Manwantaras for his posterity.

"Chakshusha was the Manu of the *sixth period* in which the Indra was Janojava; the five classes of gods were the Adya Prastutas, Bhavyas, Prithugas, and the magnanimous Lekhas, eight of each: Sumedhas, Virajas, Havishmat, Uttama, Madhu, Abhinaman, and Sahishnu were the seven sages; the kings of the earth, the sons of Chakshusha, were the powerful Uru, Puru, Satadhumna, and others."

"The Manu of the *present* is the wise lord of obsequies, the illustrious offspring of the sun; the deities are the Adityas, Vasus, and Rudras; their sovereign is Purandra: Vasistha, Kasyapa, Atri, Jamadagni, Gautama, Viswamitra, and Bharadwaja are the seven Rishis; and the nine pious sons of Vaivaswata Manu are the kings Ikshwaku, Nabhaga, Dhrishta, Sanyati, Narishyanata Nabhanidishtha, Karusha, Prishadhra, and the celebrated Vasumat." So far the particulars of seven Manvantaras which are spoken of by the Vishnu Purana as the past Manwantaras. Below are given the particulars of other seven:

" Sanjana, the daughter of Viswakarman, was the wife of the Sun, and bore him three children, the Manu (Vaivaswata), Yama, and the goddess Yami (or the Yamuna river). Unable to endure the fervours of her lord, Sanjana gave him Chhaya as his handmaid, and repaired to the forests to practise devout exercises. The Sun, supposing Chhaya to be his wife Sanjana, begot by her three other children, Sanaischara (Saturn), another Manu (Savarni), and a daughter Tapatī (the Tapti river). Chhaya, upon one occasion, being offended with Yama, the son of Sanjana, denounced an imprecation upon him, and thereby revealed to Yama and to the Sun that she was not in truth Sanjana, the mother of the former. Being further informed by Chhaya that his wife had gone the wilderness, the Sun beheld her by the eye of meditation engaged in austerities, in the figure of a mare (in the region of Uttara Kuru). Metamorphosing himself into a horse, he rejoined his wife, and begot three other children, the two Aswins, and Revanta, and then brought Sanjana back to his own dwelling. To diminish his intensity, Viswakarman placed the luminary on his lathe to grind off some of his effulgence; and in this manner reduced it an eighth, for more than that was inseparable. The parts of the divine Vaishnava splendour, residing in the Sun, that were filed off by Viswakarman, fell blazing down upon the earth, and the artist constructed of them the discus of Vishnu, the trident of Siva, the weapon of the god of wealth, the lance of Kartikeya, and the weapons of the other gods: all these Viswakarman fabricated from the superfluous rays of the sun:

"The son of Chhaya, who was called also a Manu was denominated Savarni, from being of the same caste (Savarni) as his elder brother, the Manu Vaivaswata. He presides over the ensuing or *eighth Manwantara*; the particulars of which, and the following, I will now relate. In the period in which Savarni shall be the Manu, the classes of the gods will be Sutapas, Amitabhas, and Mukhyas; twentyone of each. The seven Rishis will be Diptimat, Galava, Rama, Kripa, Drauni; my son Vyasa will be the sixth, and the seventh will be Rishyasringa. The Indra will be Bali, the sinless son of Virochan who through the favour of Vishnu is actually sovereign of part of Patala. The royal progeny of Savarni will be Virajas, Arvariva, Nirmoha, and others."

"The *ninth Manu* will be Daksha-Savarni. The Paras, Marichigarbhas, and Sudharmas will be the three classes of divinities, each consisting of twelve; their powerful chief will be the Indra, Abhuta. Savana, Dyutimat, Bhavya, Vasu, Medhatithi, Jyotishaman, and Satya will be the seven Rishis. Dhritketu, Driptiketu, Panchahasta, Niramaya, Prithusraya, and others will be the sons of the Manu."

"In the *tenth Manwantara* the Manu will be Brahma-savarni; the gods will be the Sudhamas, Viruddhas, and Satasankhyas; the Indra will be the mighty Santi; the Rishis will be Havishaman, Sukriti, Satya, Appammurti, Nabhaga, Apratimaujas and Satyaketu; and the ten sons of the Manu will be Sukshetra, Uttamaujas, Harishena and others."

" In the *eleventh Manwantara* the Manu will be Dharma-savarni; the principal classes of gods will be the Vihangama Kamagamas, and the Nirmanaratis, each thirty in number; of whom Vrisha will be the Indra: the Rishis will be Nischara, Agnitejas, Vapushaman, Vishnu, Aruni, Havishaman, and Anagha; the kings of the earth, and sons of the Manu, will be Savarga, Sarvadhama, Devanika, and others."

" In the *twelfth Manwantara* the son of Rudra, Savarni, will be the Manu: Ritudhama will be the Indra; and the Haritas, Lohitas: Sumanasas, and Sukrmas will be the classes of gods, each comprising fifteen Tapaswi, Sutapas, Tapomurti, Taporati, Tapodhriti, Tapodyuti and Tapodhana will be the Rishis; and Devavan, Upadeva, Devasreshtha and others, will be the Manu's sons, and mighty monarchs on the earth."

"In the *thirteenth Manwantara* the Manu will be Rauchya; the classes of gods thirty-three in each will be the Sudhamanas, Sudharmans, and Sukarmanas, their Indra will be Divaspati; the Rishis will be Nirmoha, Tatwadarsin, Nishprakampa, Nirutsuka, Dhritimat, Avyaya, and Sutapas; and Chitrasena, Vichitra, and others, will be the kings."

"In the fourteenth Manwantara, Bhautya will be the Manu; Suchi, the Indra:

the five classes of gods will be the Chakshushas, the Pavitras, Kanishthas, Bhrajiras, and Vavriddhas; the seven Rishis will be Agnibahu, Suchi, Sukra, Magadha, Gridhra, Yukta and Ajita; and the sons of the Manu will be Uru, Gabhira, Bradhna, and others, who will be kings, and will rule over the earth." The scheme of Manwantaras seems to be designed to provide a governing body for the universe during the period of a Manwantara. Over every Manwantara there presides a Manu as the legislator, Deities to worship, seven Rishis and a King to administer the affairs. As the Vishnu Purana says:

"The deities of the different classes receive the sacrifices during the Manwantaras to which they severally belong; and the sons of the Manu themselves, and their descendants, are the sovereigns of the earth for the whole of the same term. The Manu, the seven Rishis, the gods, the sons of the Manu, who are kings, and Indra, are the beings who preside over the world during each Manwantara." But the scheme of chronology called the Maha Yuga is a most perplexing business.

Why Kalpa should have been divided into Maha Yugas and why a Maha Yuga should have been sub-divided into four Yugas, Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Kali is a riddle which needs explanation. It is not based on mythology and unlike the era it has no reference to any real or supposed history of the Hindus.

In the first place why was the period covered by a Yuga so enormously extended as to make the whole chronology appear fabulous and fabricated.

In the Rig-Veda the word *Yuga* occurs at least 38 times. It is used in the sense of age, generation, yoke or tribe. In a few places it appears to refer to a very brief period. In many places it appears to refer to a very brief period and Sayana even goes so far as to render the term *yuge yuge by pratidinam* i.e. every day.

In the next place the conception of four Yugas is associated with a deterioration in the moral fibre in society. This conception is well stated in the following extract from the Mahabharata :

"The Krita is that age in which righteousness is eternal. In the time of that most excellent of Yugas (everything) had been done (Krita) and nothing (remained) to be done, did not then languish, nor did the people decline. Afterwards, through (the influence of) time, this yuga fell into a state of inferiority. In that age there were neither Gods, Danavas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, nor Pannagas; no buying or selling went on; the Vedas were not classed as Saman, Rich, and Yajush; no efforts were made by men: the fruit (of the earth was obtained) by their mere wish: righteousness and abandonment of the world (prevailed). No disease or decline of the organs of sense arose through the influence of the age; there was no malice, weeping,

pride, or deceit; no contention, and how could there be any lassitude? No hatred, cruelty, fear affliction, jealousy, or envy. Hence the supreme Brahma was the transcendent resort of those Yogins. Then Narayana the soul of all beings, was white, Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras possessed the characteristics of Krita. In that age were born creatures devoted to their duties. They were alike in the object of their trust, in observances and in their knowledge. At that period the castes, alike in their functions, fulfilled their duties, were unceasingly devoted to one deity, and used one formula (mantra), one rule and one rite. Though they had separate duties, they had but one Veda, and practised one duty. By works connected with the four orders, and dependent on conjunctures of time, but unaffected by desire, or (hope of) reward, they attained to supreme felicity. This complete and eternal righteousness of the four castes during the Krita was marked by the character of that age and sought after union with the supreme soul. The Krita age was free from the three qualities. Understand now the Treta, in which sacrifice commenced, righteousness decreased by a fourth, Vishnu became red; and men adhered to truth, and were devoted to a righteousness dependent on ceremonies. Then sacrifices prevailed, with holy acts and a variety of rites. In the Treta men acted with an object in view, seeking after reward for their rites and their fights, and no longer disposed to austerities and to liberality from (a simple feeling of) duty. In this age, however, they were devoted to their own duties, and to religious ceremonies. In the Dwapara age righteousness was diminished by two quarters, Vishnu became yellow, and the Veda fourfold. Some studied four Vedas, others three, others two, others one, and some none at all. The scriptures being thus divided, ceremonies were celebrated in a great variety of ways; and the people being occupied with austerity and the bestowal of gifts, became full of passion (rajasi). Owing to ignorance of the one Veda, Vedas were multiplied. And now from the decline of goodness (Sattva) few only adhered to truth. When men had fallen away from goodness, many diseases, desires and calamities, caused by destiny, assailed them, by which they were severely afflicted, and driven to practice austerities. Others desiring enjoyment and heavenly bliss, offered sacrifices. Thus, when they had reached the Dwapara, men declined through unrighteousness. In the Kali righteousness remained to the extent of one fourth only. Arrived in that age of darkness, Vishnu became black; practices enjoined by the Vedas, works of righteousness, and rites of sacrifice, ceased. Calamities, diseases, fatigue, faults, such as anger, etc., distresses, anxiety, hunger, fear, prevailed. As the ages revolve, righteousness again declines. When this takes place the people also decline. When they decay, the impulses which actuate them also decay. The practices generated by this

declension of the Yugas frustrate men's aims. Such is the Kali Yuga which has existed for a short time. Those who are long lived act in conformity with the character of the age."

This is undoubtedly very strange. There is reference to these terms in the ancient vedic literature. The words Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Askanda occur in the Taittiriya Sanhita and in the Vajasaneyi Sanhita, in the Aiteriya Brahmana and also in the Satapatha Brahmana. The Satapatha Brahmana refers "to Krita as one who takes advantage of mistakes in the game; to the Treta as one who plays on a regular plan; to the Dwapara as one who plans to over reach his fellow player to Askanda a post of the gaming room ". In the Aiteriya Brahmana and the Taittiriya Brahmana the word Kali is used in place of Askanda. The Taittiriya Brahmana speaks of the Krita as the master of the gaming hall, to the Treta as one who takes advantage of mistakes, to the Dwapara as one who sits outside, to the Kali as one who is like a post of the gaming house i.e. never leaves it. The Aiteriya Brahmana says:

There is every success to be hoped; for the unluckiest die, the Kali is lying, two others are slowly moving and half fallen, but the luckiest, the Krita, is in full motion." It is clear that in all these places the words have no other meaning than that of throws or dice in gambling.

The sense in which Manu uses these terms may also be noted. He says:

"The Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Kaliyugas are all modes of a King's action; for a King is called a Yuga; while asleep he is Kali; waking he is the Dwapara age; he is intent upon action he is Treta, moving about he is Krita."

Comparing Manu with his predecessors one has to admit that a definite change in the connotation of these words have taken place— words which formed part of the gamblers jargon have become terms of Politics having reference to the readiness of the King to do his duty and making a distinction between various types of kings, those who are active, those who are intent on action, those who are awake and those who are sleeping i.e. allowing society to go to dogs.

The question is what are the circumstances that forced the Brahmins to invent the theory of Kali Yuga? Why did the Brahmins make Kali Yuga synonymous with the degraded state of Society? Why Manu calls a sleeping ruler King Kali? Who was the King ruling in Manu's time? Why does he call him a sleeping King? These are some of the riddles which the theory of Kali Yuga gives rise to.

There are other riddles besides these which a close examination of the Kali Yuga theory presents us with. When does the Kali age actually commence?

There are various theories about the precise date when the Kali Yuga began. The Puranas have given two dates. Some say that it commenced

about the beginning of the XIV century B.C. Others say that it began on the 18th February 3102 B.C. a date on which the war between the Kauravas and Pandavas is alleged to have been found. As pointed out by Prof. Iyengar there is no evidence to prove that the Kali era was used earlier than the VII century A.D. anywhere in India. It occurs for the first time in an inscription belonging to the reign of Pulakeshi II who ruled at Badami between 610 and 642 A.D. It records two dates the Saka date 556 and the Kali date 3735. These dates adopt 3102 B.C. as the starting date of Kali Yuga. This is wrong. The date 3102 B.C. is neither the date of the Mahabharata war nor is the date of the commencement of the Kali Yuga. Mr. Kane has conclusively proved. According to the most positive statements regarding the king of different dynasties that have ruled from Parikshit the son of the Pandavas the precise date of the Mahabharata War was 1263 B.C. It cannot be 3102 B.C. Mr. Kane has also shown that the date 3102 B.C. stands for the beginning of the Kalpa and not for the beginning of Kali and that the linking up of Kali with the date 3102 B.C. instead of with the Kalpa was an error due to a misreading or a wrong transcription the term *Kalpadi* into *Kalyadi*. There is thus no precise date which the Brahmins can give for the commencement of the Kali Age. That there should be precise beginning which can be assigned to so remarkable an event is a riddle. But there are other riddles which may be mentioned. There are two dogmas associated with the Kali Age. It is strongly held by the Brahmins that in the Kali Age there are only two Varnas—the first and the last—the Brahmins and the Shudras. The two middle ones Kshatriyas and Vaishyas they say are non-existent. What is the basis of this dogma? What does this dogma mean? Does this mean that these Varnas were lost to Brahmanism or does this mean that they ceased to exist?

Which is the period of India's history which in fact accords with this dogma ?

Does this mean that the loss of these two Varnas to Brahmanism marks the beginning of Kali Yuga?

The second dogma associated with the theory of the Kali Yuga is called Kali Varjya—which means customs and usages which are not to be observed in the Kali Age. They are scattered in the different Puranas. But the Adityapurana has modified them and brought them in one place. The practices which come under Kali Varjya are given below:

1. To appoint the husband's brother for procreating a son on a widow.
- "2. The remarriage of a (married) girl (whose marriage is not consummated) and of one (whose marriage was consummated) to another husband (after the death of the first). "
3. The marriage with girls of different Varna among persons of the three twice-born classes."

"4. The killing even in a straight fight of Brahmanas that have become desperadoes."

"5. The acceptance (for all ordinary intercourse such as eating with him) of a twice-born person who is in the habit of voyaging over the sea in a ship, even after he has undergone a prayascitta.

"6. The initiation for a sattra. "7. The taking a Kamandalu (a jar for water)" "8. Starting on the Great Journey."

"9. The killing of a cow in the sacrifice called Gomedha;" "10. The partaking of wine even in the Srautmani sacrifice." "11-12. Licking the ladle (sruc) after the Agnihotra Homa in order to take off the remains of the offerings and using the ladle in the agnihotra afterwards when it has been so licked."

"13. Entering into the stage of forest hermit as laid down in sastras about it. "

"14. Lessening the periods of impurity (due to death and birth) in accordance with the conduct and vedic learning of a *man*" "15. Prescribing death as the penance (Prayascitta) for Brahmanas."

"16. Explanation (by secretly performed Prayascittas) of the mortal sins other than theft (of gold) and the sin of contact (with those guilty of Mahapatakas)."

"17. The act of offering with Mantras animal flesh to the bridegroom, the guest, and the pitrs."

"18. 'The acceptance as sons of those other than the *aurasa* (natural) and adopted sons. "

" 19. Ordinary intercourse with those who incurred the sin of (having intercourse with) women of higher castes, even after they had undergone the Prayascitta for such sin."

" 20. The abandonment of the wife of an elderly person (or of one who is entitled to respect) when she has had intercourse with one with whom it is severely condemned."

"21. Killing oneself for the sake of another."

"22. Giving up food left after one has partaken of it." "23. Resolve to worship a particular idol for life (in return for payment) "

"24. Touching the bodies of persons who are in impurity due to death after the charred bones are collected ". " 25. The actual slaughter by Brahmanas of the sacrificial animal." "26. Sale of the Soma plant by Brahmanas." "27. Securing food even from a Shudra when a Brahmana has had no food for six times of meals (i.e. for three days)."

"28. Permission to (a Brahmana) householder to take cooked food from Shudras if they are his dasas, cowherds, hereditary friends, persons cultivating his land on an agreement to pay part of the produce."

"29. Going on a very distant pilgrimage."

"30. Behaviour of a pupil towards his teacher's wife as towards a teacher that is declared in smrtis".

"31. The maintenance by Brahamanas in adversity (by following unworthy avocations) and the mode of livelihood in which a Brahmana does not care to accumulate for tomorrow."

" 32. The acceptance of *aranis* (two wooden blocks for producing fire) by Brahmanas (in the Homa at the time of *jatakarma*) in order that all the ceremonies for the child from *jatakarma* to his marriage may be performed therein."

"33. Constant journeys by Brahamanas."

"34. Blowing of fire with the mouth (i.e. without employing a bamboo *dhamni*."

"35. Allowing women who have become polluted by rape, &c., to freely mix in the caste (when they have performed *prayascitta*) as declared in the sastric texts. "

"36. Begging of food by a *sannyasin* from persons of all Varnas (including sudra)."

"37. To wait (i.e. not to use) for ten days water that has recently been dug in the ground."

"38. Giving fee to the teacher as demanded by him (at the end of study) according to the rules laid down in the sastra."

"39. The employment of sudras as cook for Brahmanas and the rest. "

"40. Suicide of old people by calling from a precipice or into fire."

"41. Performing Acamana by respectable people in water that would remain even after a cow has drunk it to its heart's content."

"42. Fining witnesses who depose to a dispute between father and son. "

"43. Sannyasin should stay where he happened to be in the evening."

These are the Kali Varjyas set out in the adityapurana. The strange thing about this code of Kali Varjya is that its significance has not been fully appreciated. It is simply referred to as a list of things forbidden in the Kali Yuga. But there is more than this behind this list of don'ts. People are no doubt forbidden to follow the practices listed in the Kali Varjya Code. The question however is: Are these practices condemned as being immoral, sinful or otherwise harmful to society? The answer is no. One likes to know why these practices if they are forbidden are not condemned? Herein lies the riddle of the Kali Varjya Code. This technique of forbidding a practice without condemning it stands in utter contrast with the procedure followed in earlier ages. To take only one illustration. The Apastamba Dharma Sutra forbids the practice of giving all property to the eldest son. But he condemns it. Why did



the Brahmins invent this new technics forbid but not condemn ? There must be some special reason for this departure. What is that reason?

## APPENDIX I

### THE RIDDLE OF RAMA AND KRISHNA

Rama is the hero of the Ramayana whose author is Valmiki. The story of the Ramayana is a very short one. Besides it is simple and in itself there is nothing sensational about it.

Rama is the son of Dasharatha the king of Ayodhya the modern Benares. Dasharatha had three wives, Kausalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra besides several hundred concubines. Kaikeyi had married Dasharatha on terms which were at the time of marriage unspecified and which Dasharatha was bound to fulfil whenever he was called upon by Kaikeyi to do so. Dasharatha was childless for a long time. An heir to the throne was ardently desired by him. Seeing that there was no hope of his begetting a son on any of his three wives he decided to perform a Putreshti Yajna and called the sage Shringi at the sacrifice who prepared pindas and gave the three wives of Dasharatha to eat them. After they ate the pindas three wives became pregnant and gave birth to sons. Kausalya gave birth to Rama, Kaikeyi gave birth to Bharata and Sumitra gave birth to two sons Laxman and Satrugana. In due course Rama was married to Sita. When Rama came of age, Dasharatha thought of resigning the throne in favour of Rama and retiring from kingship. While this was being settled Kaikeyi raised the question of rendering her satisfaction of the terms on which she had married Dasharatha. On being asked to *state* her terms she demanded that her son Bharata should be installed on the throne in preference to Rama and Rama should live in forest for 12 years. Dasharatha with great reluctance agreed. Bharata became king of Ayodhya and Rama accompanied by his wife Sita and his step brother Laxman went to live in the forest. While the three living in the forest Ravana the king of Lanka kidnapped Sita and took her away and kept her in his palace intending to make her one of his wives. Rama and Laxman then started search of Sita. On the way they meet Sugriva and Hanuman two leading personages of the Vanara (monkey) race and form friendship with them. With their help the place of the abduction was located and with their help they marched on Lanka, defeated Ravana in the battle and rescued Sita. Rama returns with Laxman and Sita to Ayodhya. By that time twelve years had elapsed and the term prescribed by Kaikeyi was fulfilled with the result that Bharata gave up the throne and in his place Rama became the king of Ayodhya.

*(This is a 49-page typed copy placed in a well-bound file along with the MS of ' Symbols of Hinduism '. This riddle does not find place in the original Table*

*of Contents. Hence this is included as an Appendix to this part.—Ed.*

*Note: Government does not concur with the views expressed in this Chapter. )*

Such is in brief the outline of the story of the Ramayana as told by Valmiki.

There is nothing in this story to make Rama the object of worship. He is only a dutiful son. But Valmiki saw something extraordinary in Rama and that is why he undertook to compose the Ramayana. Valmiki asked Narada the following question\*:

"Tell me Oh! Narada, who is the most accomplished man on earth at the present time?"

and then goes on to elaborate what he means by accomplished man. He defines his accomplished man as:

" Powerful, one who knows the secret of religion, one who knows gratitude, truthful, one who is ready to sacrifice his self interest even when in distress to fulfil a religious vow, virtuous in his conduct, eager to safeguard the interests of all, strong pleasing in appearance with power of self-control, able to subdue anger, illustrious, with no jealousy for the prosperity of others, and in war able to strike terror in the hearts of Gods."

Narada then asks for time to consider and after mature deliberation tells him that the only person who can be said to possess these virtues is Rama, the son of Dasharatha.

It is because of his virtues that Rama has come to be deified. But is Rama a worthy personality of deification? Let those who accept him an object worthy of worship as a God consider the following facts.

Rama's birth is miraculous and it may be that the suggestion that he was born from a pinda prepared by the sage Shrung is an allegorical glass to cover the naked truth that he was begotten upon Kausalya by the sage Shrung although the two did not stand in the relationship of husband and wife. In any case his birth if not disreputable in its origin is certainly unnatural.

There are other incidents connected with the birth of Rama the unsavory character of which it will be difficult to deny.

Valmiki starts his Ramayana by emphasizing the fact that Rama is an Avatar of Vishnu and it is Vishnu who agreed to take birth as Rama and be the son of Dasharatha. The God Brahma came to know of this and felt that in order that this Rama Avatar of Vishnu be a complete success arrangement shall be made that Rama shall have powerful associates to help him and cooperate with him. There were none such existing then.

The Gods agreed to carry out the command of Brahma and engaged

themselves in wholesale acts of fornication not only against Apsaras who were prostitutes not only against the unmarried daughters of Yakshas and Nagas but also against the lawfully wedded wives of Ruksha, Vidhyadhar, Gandharvas, Kinnars and Vanaras and produced the Vanaras who became the associates of Rama.

Rama's birth is thus accompanied by general debauchery if not in his case certainly in the case of his associates. His marriage to Sita is not above comment. According to Buddha Ramayana, Sita was the sister of Rama, both were the children of Dasharatha. The Ramayana of Valmiki does not agree with the relationship mentioned in Buddha Ramayana. According to Valmiki Sita was the daughter of the king Janaka of Videha and therefore not a sister of Rama. This is not convincing for even according to Valmiki she is not the natural born daughter of Janaka but a child found by a farmer in his field while ploughing it and presented by him to king Janaka and brought up by Janaka. It was therefore in a superficial sense that Sita could be said to be the daughter of Janaka. The story in the Buddha Ramayana is natural and not inconsistent with the Aryan rules \* of marriage. If the story is true, then Rama's marriage to Sita is no ideal to be copied. In another sense Rama's marriage was not an ideal marriage which could be copied. One of the virtues ascribed to Rama is that he was monogamous. It is difficult to understand how such a notion could have become common. For it has no foundation in fact. Even Valmiki refers\* to the many wives of Rama. These were of course in addition to his many concubines. In this he was the true son of his nominal father Dasharatha who had not only the three wives referred to above but many others.

Let us next consider his character as an individual and as a king. In speaking of him as an individual I will refer to only two incidents one relating to his treatment of Vali and other relating to his treatment of his own wife Sita. First let us consider the incident of Vali.

Vali and Sugriva were two brothers. They belonged to the Vanar race and came from a ruling family which had its own kingdom the capital of which was Kishkindha. At the time when Sita was kidnapped by Ravana, Vali was reigning at Kishkindha. While Vali was on the throne he was engaged in a war with a Rakshasa by name Mayavi. In the personal combat between the two Mayavi ran for his life. Both Vali and Sugriva pursued him. Mayavi entered into a deep cavity in the earth. Vali asked Sugriva to wait at the mouth of the cavity and himself went inside. After sometime a flood of blood came from inside the cavity. Sugriva concluded that Vali must have been killed by Mayavi and came to Kishkindha and got himself declared king in place of Vali and made Hanuman his Prime Minister

As a matter of fact, Vali was not killed. It was Mayavi who was killed by Vali. Vali came out of the cavity but did not find Sugriva there. He proceeded to Kishkindha and to his great surprise he found that Sugriva had proclaimed himself king. Vali naturally became enraged at this act of treachery on the part of his brother Sugriva and he had good ground to be. Sugriva should have ascertained, should not merely have assumed that Vali was dead. Secondly Vali had a son by name Angad whom Sugriva should have made the king as the legitimate heir of Vali. He did neither of the two things. His was a clear case of usurpation. Vali drove out Sugriva and took back the throne. The two brothers became mortal enemies.

This occurred just after Ravana had kidnapped Sita. Rama and Laxman were wandering in search of her. Sugriva and Hanuman were wandering in search of friends who could help them to regain the throne from Vali. The two parties met quite accidentally. After informing each other of their difficulties a compact was arrived at between the two. It was agreed that Rama should help Sugriva to kill Vali and to establish him on the throne of Kishkindha. On the part of Sugriva and Hanuman it was agreed that they should help Rama to regain Sita. To enable Rama to fulfil his part of the compact it was planned that Sugriva should wear a garland in his neck as to be easily distinguishable to Rama from Vali and that while the dual was going on Rama should conceal himself behind a tree and then shoot an arrow at Vali and kill him. Accordingly a dual was arranged, Sugriva with a garland in his neck and while the dual was on, Rama standing behind a tree shot Vali with his arrow and opened the way to Sugriva to be the king of Kishkindha. This murder of Vali is the greatest blot on the character of Rama. It was a crime which was thoroughly unprovoked, for Vali had no quarrel with Rama. It was most cowardly act for Vali was unarmed. It was a planned and premeditated murder.

Consider his treatment of his own wife Sita. With the army collected for him by Sugriva and Hanuman, Rama invades Lanka. There too he plays the same mean part as he did as between the two brothers Vali and Sugriva. He takes the help of Bibhishana the brother of Ravana promising him to kill Ravana and his son and place him on the vacant throne. Rama kills Ravana and also his son Indrajit. The first thing Rama does after the close of the fight is to give a decent burial to the dead body of Ravana. Thereafter he interests himself in the coronation of Bibhishana and it is after the coronation is over that he sends Hanuman to Sita and that took to inform her that he, Laxman and Sugriva are hale and hearty and that they have killed Ravana.

The first thing he should have done after disposing of Ravana was to have gone to Sita. He does not do so. He finds more interest in the coronation than in Sita. Even when the coronation is over he does not go himself but sends

Hanuman. And what is the message he sends? He does not ask Hanuman to bring her. He asks him to inform her that he is hale and hearty. It is Sita who expresses to Hanuman her desire to see Rama. Rama does not go to Sita his own wife who was kidnapped and confined by Ravana for more than 10 months. Sita is brought to him and what does Rama say to Sita when he sees her? It would be difficult to believe any man with ordinary human kindness could address to his wife in such dire distress as Rama did to Sita when he met her in Lanka if there was not the direct authority of Valmiki. This is how Rama addressed her\*:

I have got you as a prize in a war after conquering my enemy your captor. I have recovered my honour and punished my enemy. People have witnessed my military prowess and I am glad my labours have been rewarded. I came here to kill Ravana and wash off the dishonour. I did not take this trouble for your sake." Could there be anything more cruel than this conduct of Rama towards Sita? He does not stop there. He proceeded to tell her:

" I suspect your conduct. You must have been spoiled by Ravana. Your very sight is revolting to me. On you daughter of Janaka, I allow you to go anywhere you like. I have nothing to do with you. I conquered you back and I am content for that was my object. I cannot think that Ravana would have failed to enjoy a woman as beautiful as you are."

naturally Sita calls Rama low and mean and tells him quite that she would have committed suicide and saved him all this if when Hanuman first came he had sent her a message that he abandoned her on the ground that she was kidnapped. To give him no excuse Sita undertakes to prove her purity. She enters the fire and comes out unscathed. The Gods satisfied with this evidence proclaim that she is pure. It is then that Rama agrees to take her back to Ayodhya.

And what does he do with her when he brings her back to Ayodhya. Of course, he became king and she became queen. But while Rama remained king, Sita ceased to be a queen very soon. This incident reflects great infamy upon Rama. It is recorded by Valmiki in his Ramayana that some days after the coronation of Rama and Sita as king and queen Sita conceived. Seeing that she was carrying some residents of evil disposition began to calumniate Sita suggesting that she must have conceived from Ravana while she was in Lanka and blaming Rama for taking such a woman back as his wife. This malicious gossip in the town was reported by Bhadra, the Court joker to Rama. Rama evidently was stung by this calumny. He was overwhelmed with a sense of disgrace. This is quite natural. What is quite unnatural is the means he adopts of getting rid of this disgrace. To get rid of this disgrace he takes the shortest cut and the swiftest means—namely to abandon her, a

woman in a somewhat advanced state of pregnancy in a jungle, without friends, without provision, without even notice in a most treacherous manner. There is no doubt that the idea of abandoning Sita was not sudden and had not occurred to Rama on the spur of the moment. The genesis of the idea the developing of it and the plan of executing are worth some detailed mention. When Bhadra reports to him the gossip about Sita which had spread in the town Rama calls his brothers and tells them his feelings. He tells them Sita's purity and chastity was proved in Lanka, that Gods had vouched for it and that he absolutely believed in her innocence, purity and chastity. "All the same the public are calumniating Sita and are blaming me and putting me to shame. No one can tolerate such disgrace. Honour is a great asset, Gods as well as great men strive to maintain it in tact. I cannot bear this dishonour and disgrace. To save myself from such dishonour and disgrace I shall be ready even to abandon you. Don't think I shall hesitate to abandon Sita."

This shows that he had made up his mind to abandon Sita as the easiest way of saving himself from public calumny without waiting to consider whether the way was fair or foul. The life of Sita simply did not count. What counted was his own personal name and fame. He of course does not take the manly course of stopping this gossip, which as a king he could do and which as a husband who was convinced of his wife's innocence he was bound to it. He yielded to the public gossip and there are not wanting Hindus who use this as ground to prove that Rama was a democratic king when others could equally well say that he was a weak and cowardly monarch: Be that as it may that diabolical plan of saving his name and his fame he discloses to his brothers but not to Sita the only person who was affected by it and the only person who was entitled to have notice of it. But she is kept entirely in the dark. Rama keeps it away from Sita as a closely guarded secret and was waiting for an opportunity to put his plan into action. Eventually the cruel fate of Sita gives him the opportunity he was waiting for. Women who are carrying exhibit all sorts of cravings for all sorts of things. Rama knew of this. So one day he asked Sita if there was anything for which she felt a craving. She said yes. Rama said what was it. She replied that she would like to live in the vicinity of the Ashrama of sage on the bank of the river Ganges and live on fruits and roots at least for one night. Rama simply jumped at the suggestion of Sita and said " Be easy my dear I shall see that you are sent there tomorrow ". Sita treats this as an honest promise by a loving husband. But what does Rama do? He thinks it is a good opportunity for carrying through his plan of abandoning Sita. Accordingly he called his brothers to a secret conference and disclosed to them his determination to use this desire of Sita as an opportunity to carry out his plan of abandonment of Sita. He tells

his brothers not to intercede on behalf of Sita, and warns them that if they came in his way he would look upon them as his enemies. Then he tells Laxman to take Sita in a chariot next day to the Ashram in the jungle on the bank of the river Ganges and to abandon her there. Laxman did not know how he could muster courage to tell Sita what was decided about Sita by Rama. Sensing his difficulty Rama informs Laxman that Sita had already expressed her desire to spend some time in the vicinity of an Ashrama on the bank of the river and eased the mind of Laxman. This confabulation took place at night. Next morning Laxman asked Sumanta to yoke the horses to the chariot. Sumanta informs Laxman of his having done so. Laxman then goes into the palace and meets Sita and reminds her of her having expressed her desire to pass some days in the vicinity of an Ashrama and Rama having promised to fulfil the same and tells her of his having been charged by Rama to do the needful in the matter. He points to her the chariot waiting there and says 'let us go!' Sita jumps into the chariot with her heart full of gratitude to Rama. With Laxman as her companion and Sumanta as coachman the chariot proceeds to its appointed place. At last they were on the bank of the Ganges and were ferried across by the fishermen. Laxman fell at Sita's feet, and with hot tears issuing from his eyes he said ' Pardon me, O, blameless queen, for what I am doing. My orders are to abandon you here, for the people blame Rama for keeping you in his house."

Sita abandoned by Rama and left to die in a jungle went for shelter in the Ashrama of Valmiki which was near about. Valmiki gave her protection and kept her in his Ashram. There in course of time Sita gave birth to twin sons, called Kusa and Lava. The three lived with Valmiki. Valmiki brought up the boys and taught them to sing the Ramayana which he had composed. For 12 years the boys lived in the forest in the Ashrama of Valmiki not far from Ayodhya where Rama continued to rule. Never once in those 12 years this model husband and loving father cared to inquire what had happened to Sita whether she was living or whether she was dead. Twelve years after Rama meets Sita in a strange manner. Rama decided to perform a Yadna and issued invitation to all the Rishis to attend and take part. For reasons best known to Rama himself no invitation was issued to Valmiki although his Ashram was near to Ayodhya. But Valmiki came to the Yadna of his own accord accompanied by the two sons of Sita introducing them as his disciples. While the Yadna was going on the two boys used to perform recitations of Ramayana in the presence of the Assembly. Rama was very pleased and made inquiries when he was informed that they were the sons of Sita. It was then he remembered Sita and what does he do then? He does not send for Sita. He calls these innocent boys who knew nothing about their

parents' sin, who were the only victims of a cruel destiny to tell Valmiki that if Sita was pure and chaste she could present herself in the Assembly to take a vow thereby remove the calumny cast against herself and himself. This is a thing she had once done in Lanka. This is a thing she could have been asked to do again before she was sent away. There was no promise that after this vindication of her character Rama was prepared to take her back. Valmiki brings her to the Assembly. When she was in front of Rama, Valmiki said, 'O, son of Dasharatha, here is Sita whom you abandoned in consequence of public disapprobation. She will now swear her purity if permitted by you. Here are your twin-born sons bred up by me in my hermitage.' 'I know,' said Rama 'that Sita is pure and that these are my sons. She performed an ordeal in Lanka in proof of her purity and therefore I took her back. But people here have doubts still, and let Sita perform an ordeal here that all these Rishis and people may witness it.'

With eyes cast down on the ground and with hands folded Sita swore " As I never thought of any man except Rama even in my mind. let mother Earth open and bury me. As I always loved Rama in words, in thoughts, and in deed, let mother Earth open and bury me! As she uttered the oath, the earth verily opened and Sita was carried away inside seated on a golden *simhasana* (throne). Heavenly flowers fell on Sita's head while the audience looked on as in a trance.

That means that Sita preferred to die rather than return to Rama who had behaved no better than a brute. Such is the tragedy of Sita and the crime of Rama the God. Let me throw some search light on Rama the King. Rama is held out as an ideal King. But can that conclusion be said to be founded in fact?

As a matter of fact Rama never functions, as a King. He was a nominal King. The administration as Valmiki states were entrusted to Bharata his brother. He had freed himself from the cares and worries about his kingdom and his subjects. Valmiki has very minutely described\* the daily life of Rama after he became King. According to that account the day was divided into two parts. Up to forenoon and afternoon. From morning to forenoon he was engaged in performing religious rites and ceremonies and offering devotion. The afternoon he spent alternately in the company of Court jesters and in the Zenana. When he got tired of the Zenana he joined the company of jesters and when he got tired of jesters he went back to the Zenana\*. Valmiki also gives a detailed description of how Rama spent his life in the Zenana. This Zenana was housed in a park called Ashoka Vana. There Rama, used to take his meal. The food according to Valmiki consisted of all kinds of delicious viands. They included flesh and fruits and liquor. Rama was not a teetotaler.



He drank liquor copiously and Valmiki records that Rama saw to it that Sita joined with him in his drinking bouts\*. From the description of the Zenana of Rama as given by Valmiki it was by no means a mean thing. There were Apsaras, Uraga and Kinnari accomplished in dancing and singing. There were other beautiful women brought from different parts. Rama sat in the midst of these women drinking and dancing. They pleased Rama and Rama garlanded them. Valmiki calls Rama as a 'Prince among women's men'. This was not a day's affair. It was a regular course of his life.

As has already been said Rama never attended to public business. He never observed the ancient rule of Indian kings of hearing the wrongs of his subjects and attempting to redress them. Only one occasion has been recorded by Valmiki when he personally heard the grievance of his subjects. But unfortunately the occasion turned out to be a tragic one. He took upon himself to redress the wrong but in doing so committed the worst crime that history has ever recorded. The incident is known as the murder of Sambuka the Shudra. It is said by Valmiki that in Rama's reign there were no premature deaths in his kingdom. It happened, however, that a certain Brahman's son died in a premature death. The bereaved father carried his body to the gate of the king's palace, and placing it there, cried aloud and bitterly reproached Rama for the death of his son, saying that it must be the consequence of some sin committed within his realm, and that the king himself was guilty if he did not punish it: and Finally threatened to end his life there by sitting *dharna* (hunger-strike) against Rama unless his son was restored to life. Rama thereupon consulted his council of eight learned Rishis and Narada amongst them told Rama that some Shudra among his subjects must have been performing Tapasya (ascetic exercises), and thereby going against Dharma (sacred law); for according to it the practice of Tapasya was proper to the twice-born alone, while the duty of the Shudras consisted only in the service of the twice-born. Rama was thus convinced that it was the sin committed by a Shudra in transgressing Dharma in that manner, which was responsible for the death of the Brahmin boy. So, Rama mounted his aerial car and scoured the countryside for the culprit. At last, in a wild region far away to the south he espied a man practising rigorous austerities of a certain kind. He approached the man, and with no more ado than to enquire of him and inform himself that he was a Shudra, by name Sambuka who was practising Tapasya with a view to going to heaven in his own earthly person and without so much as a warning, expostulation or the like addressed to him, cut off his head. And to and behold! that very moment the dead Brahman boy in distant Ayodhya began to breathe again. Here in the wilds the Gods rained flowers on the king from their joy at his having prevented a Shudra from gaining admission to

their celestial abode through the power of the Tapasya which he had no right to perform. They also appeared before Rama and congratulated him on his deed. In answer to his prayer to them to revive the dead Brahman boy lying at the palace gate in Ayodhya, they informed him that he had already come to life. They then departed. Rama thence proceeded to the Ashrama which was nearby of the sage +Agastya, who commended the step he had taken with Sambuka, and presented him with a divine bracelet. Rama then returned to his capital. Such is Rama.

## II

Now about Krishna.

He is the hero of the Mahabharata. Really speaking the Mahabharata is principally connected with the Kauravas and the Pandavas. It is the story of the war fought by the two for right to the kingdom which belonged to their ancestors. They should be the principal characters. But they are not. It is Krishna who is the hero of the epic. This is a little strange thing. But what is stranger still is the possibility not being a contemporary of the Kauravas and Pandavas. Krishna was the friend of the Pandavas who had their empire. Krishna was the enemy of Kansa who also had his empire. It does not seem possible that two such empires should subsist side by side at once and at the same time. Secondly, in the Mahabharata there is nothing to show that there was any intercourse between the two empires. The two stories of Krishna and the Pandavas have been mixed together at some later date in order to provide Krishna with a larger theater to play a bigger part. The mixture of the two stories is the result of a deliberate design on the part of Vyas to glorify Krishna and to raise him above all.

In the hands of Vyas Krishna is God among men. That is why he is made the hero of the Mahabharata. Does Krishna really deserve to be called God among men? A short sketch of his life alone will help to give a correct answer. Krishna was born at Mathura at midnight on the 8th day of the month of Bhadra. His father was Vasudeva of the Yadu race, and his mother Devaki, daughter of Devaka, the brother of Ugrasen, king of Mathura. Ugrasen's wife had an illicit connection with Drumila the Danava king of Saubha. From this illicit connection was born Kansa who was in a sense the cousin of Devaki. Kansa imprisoned Ugrasen and usurped the throne of Mathura. Having heard from Narada or *Daivavani*, a voice from Heaven that Devaki's eighth child would kill him, Kansa imprisoned both Devaki and her husband and killed six of their children as they were born one after another. The seventh child, Balarama, was miraculously transferred from Devaki's womb to that of Rohini, another wife of Vasudeva. When the eighth child, Krishna, was born, he was

secretly borne by his father to the other side of the river Yamuna, where Nanda and his wife Yasoda, natives of Vraja, were then living. The Yamuna rolled back her waters to make way for the divine child, the Ananta, the chief of serpents protected him with his ample hood from the heavy torrent of rain that was then falling. By a previous arrangement, Vasudeva exchanged his son for Nanda's newly born daughter. Yogindra or Mahamaya and presented the latter to Kansa as his eighth child, but she flew away, telling him that the child which is being brought up by Nanda and Yasoda would kill him. This led Kansa to make a series of unsuccessful attempts to kill the child Krishna. With this object he sent to Vraja a number of Asuras in various forms. The killing of these Asuras and number of other heroic deeds, impossible for an ordinary human child are the chief staple of the Puranic account of Krishna's early life. Some of them are mentioned in the Mahabharata also. As might be expected, the authorities differ largely in their narration of these facts. I mention only some of them, following chiefly the later authorities.

The first or one of the first of these is the killing of Putana. She was Kansa's nurse and was sent by him to kill Krishna in the form of a female vulture, according to Harivamsa, and of a beautiful woman according to the Bhagavata. As she pretending to suckle Krishna, put her poisoned breast into his mouth, he sucked it so powerfully as to draw out her very life-blood so that she fell down with an yell and died.

Krishna performed another of these feats when he was only three months old. It was the breaking of a *Sakata*, a cart which was used as a cupboard and had several jars and pans, full of milk and curd, ranged on it. According to the Harivamsa Sakata was an Asura sent by Kansa and had entered the cart intending to crush the infant Krishna by its weight. However, Yasoda had placed the boy under the cart and gone to bathe in the Yamuna. On her return she was told that he had kicked against it and broken it to pieces with all that lay on it. This event surprised and frightened Yasoda, and she offered pujas to avert the evils threatened by it.

When Putana and Sakata's attempts to kill Krishna having failed, Kansa sent another of his emissaries an asura named Trinavarta, to attempt the same task. He came in the form of a bird and carried aloft the divine child, then only a year old. But he soon dropped down dead with the child safe and holding his throat tightly.

The next feat was the breaking of two arjuna trees growing side by side. They are described as the bodies of two Yakshas who were converted into this form by a curse, and who were released by this feat of Krishna. When he had learnt to crawl about and could hardly be kept out of mischief Yasoda tied him with a rope to a wooden mortar and went to mind her household duties.

When she was out of sight, Krishna began to drag the mortar after him till it stuck fast between the trees. Still pulling the heavy weight after him, he uprooted the trees and made them fall down with a tremendous noise, himself remaining unhurt by them.

Now these events filled Nanda with fear, and he seriously thought of leaving Vraja and moving to another settlement. While he was thus thinking, the place was infested with wolves which made great havoc among the cattle and made it quite unsafe. This fixed the wavering intention of the nomads and they moved with all their belongings to the pleasant woodland named Vrindavan. Krishna was then only seven years old.

After his removal to this new settlement, Krishna killed quite a large number of Asuras. One of them was Arishta, who came in the form of a bull; another, Keshin, who was disguised as a horse. Five others, Vratrasura, Bakasura, Aghasura, Bhomasura and Sankhasura, the last a Yaksha. More important than these was Kaliya, a snake chief, who lived with his family in a whirlpool of the Yamuna and thus poisoned its water. Krishna one day threw himself on Kaliya's hood and danced so wildly as to make him vomit blood. He would thus have killed him, but on the intervention of the snake's family, he spared him and allowed him to move away to another abode.

The subjugation of Kaliya was followed by Vastra-harana, the carrying away of clothes, a hard nut to crack for worshippers and admirers of the Puranic Krishna. The whole narration is so obscene, that even the merest outlines will, I fear, be felt to be indelicate. But I must give them in as decent a form as is possible, to make my brief account of Krishna's doings as full as I can. Some Gopies had dived into the waters of the Yamuna for a bath, leaving their clothes on the banks, as is said to be still the custom in some parts of the country. Krishna seized the clothes and with them climbed upon a tree on the riverside. When asked to return them, he refused to do so unless the women approached the tree and each begged her own dress for herself. This they could do only by coming naked out of the water and presenting themselves naked before Krishna. When they did this, Krishna was pleased and he gave them their clothes. This story is found in the Bhagavata.

The next of Krishna's feats was the uplifting of the Govardhan Hill. The Gopas were about to celebrate their annual sacrifices to Indra, the God of rain, and began to make grand preparations for it. Krishna pointed out to them that as they were a pastoral and not an agricultural tribe, their real Gods were kine, hills and woods, and them only they should worship, and not such Gods as the rain-giving Indra. The Gopas were convinced, and giving up their intention of worshipping Indra, celebrated a grand sacrifice to the hill Govardhan, the nourisher of kine, accompanied with feasting and dancing.

Indra was as he could not but be greatly enraged at this affront offered to him, and as punishment, he poured rain on the Gopa settlement for seven days and nights continually. Krishna, nothing daunted, uprooted the hill and held it up as an umbrella over the settlement and thus protected the Gopas and their cattle from the ruinous effects of Indra's wrath. As to the jealousy between Indra and the Krishna of the Rig-Veda and that between the former and the Vishnu of the Satapatha Brahmana, I have already spoken in my first lecture.

Krishna's youthful career was full of illicit intimacy with the young women of Brindaban which is called his Rasalila. Rasa is a sort of circular dance in which the hands of the dancers, men and women, are joined together. It is said to be still prevalent among some of the wild tribes of this country. Krishna, it is stated, was in the habit of often enjoying this dance with the young Gopis of Brindaban, who loved him passionately. One of these dances is described in the Vishnu Purana, the Harivamsa and the Bhagavata. All these authorities interpret the Gopi's love for Krishna as piety—love to God, and see nothing wrong in their amorous dealings with him—dealings which, in the case of any other person, would be highly reprehensible according to their own admission. All agree as to the general character of the affair—the scene, the time and season, the drawing of the women with sweet music, the dance, the amorous feelings of the women for Krishna, and their expression in various ways. But while the Vishnu Purana tries— not always successfully—to keep within the limits of decency, the Harivamsa begins to be plainly indecent, and the Bhagavata throws away all reserve and revels in indecency.

Of all his indecencies the worst is his illicit life with one Gopi by name Radha. Krishna's illicit relations with Radha are portrayed in the Brahmavaivarta Purana. Krishna is married to Rukmani the daughter of King Rukmangad. Radha was married to..... Krishna who abandons his lawfully wedded wife Rukmini and seduces Radha wife of another man and lives with her in sin without remorse.

Krishna was also a warrior and a politician even at a very early age, we are told, when he was in his twelfth year. Every one of his acts whether as a warrior or as a politician was an immoral act. His first act in this sphere was the assassination of his maternal uncle Kamsa. 'Assassination' is not too strong a term for it, for though Kamsa had given him provocation, he was not killed in the course of a battle or even in a single combat. The story is that having heard God Krishna's youthful feats at Brindaban, Kamsa got frightened and determined to secure his death by confronting him with a great athlete in an open exhibition of arms. Accordingly he announced the celebration of a *dhanuryajna* a bow sacrifice, and invited Krishna, Balarama and their Gopa friends to it. Akrura, an adherent of Krishna, but an officer of

Kamsa. was deputed by the latter to bring the brothers to Mathura. They came, determined to kill Kamsa. He had provoked not only them, but other Yadavas also, whom his persecution had compelled to leave Mathura. The brothers were therefore supported by a conspiracy against him. Having arrived at Mathura, they desired to change their simple Gopa dress for a more decent one, and asked for clothes from Kamsa's washerman, whom they met in the street. As the man behaved insolently with them, they killed him and took from his stock whatever clothes they liked. They then met Kubja, a hunch-backed woman who served as Kamsa's perfumer. At their request she annointed them with sandal paste and in return was cured by Krishna of her bodily deformity. The Bhagvata makes him visit her on a subsequent occasion and describes his union with her with its characteristic indecency. However, on the present occasion, the brothers annointed by Kubja and garlanded by Sudama, a flower-seller, entered the place of sacrifice and broke the great bow to which the sacrifice was to be offered. The frightened Kamsa sent an elephant named Kuvalayapida to kill them. Krishna killed the elephant and entered the arena. There the brothers encountered Kamsa's chosen athletes, Chanura, Mustika, Toshalaka and Andhra. Krishna killed Chanura and Toshalaka and Balarama the other two. Frustrated in his plan of securing Krishna's death by stratagem Kamsa ordered the brothers and their Gopa friends to be turned out and banished from his kingdom, - their herds to be confiscated and Vasudeva, Nanda and his own father Ugrasen to be assassinated. At this Krishna got upon the platform on which Karnsa was seated, and seizing him by the hair, threw him down on the ground and killed him. Having consoled Kamsa's weeping wives he ordered a royal cremation for him, and refusing the kingdom offered him by Ugrasen, installed the latter on the throne and invited his banished relatives to return to Mathura.

The next episode is Krishna's fight with Jarasandha, emperor of Magadha, and Kalayavana. Jarasandha was the son-in-law of Kamsa. Enraged by Krishna's assassination of Karnsa, his son-in-law, Jarasandha is said to have invaded Mathura seventeen times and to have been every time repulsed by Krishna. Fearing, however, that an eighteenth invasion would be disastrous to the city, Krishna removed the Yadavas to Dwarka at the west end of Gujarat Peninsula. After the removal of the Yadavas from Mathura, the city was besieged by Kalayavana at the instigation of Jarasandha. While pursuing the unarmed Krishna, however, out of the city, the invader was burnt to ashes, by fire issuing from the eyes of king Muchakunda, who had been sleeping in a mountain cave and whom he had awakened with a kick mistaking him for Krishna. Krishna defeated the army of Kalayavana but while flying to Dwaraka with the booty, he was overtaken by Jarasandha. He, however, evaded his

enemy by climbing a hill and flying to Dwaraka after jumping down from it.

Krishna was now, for the first time, married. He married Rukmini daughter of Bhisma, king of Vidarbha. Her father, at Jarasandha's advice, was making preparations to get her married to Sishupala, Krishna's cousin and king of Chedi. But Krishna carried her off on the day before the proposed marriage. The Bhagavata says she had fallen in love with Krishna and had addressed a love letter to him. This does not seem to be true. For Krishna did not remain a true and faithful husband of Rukmini. Rukmini was gradually followed by an enormously vast army of co-wives till the number of Krishna's consorts rose to sixteen thousand one hundred and eight. His children numbered one lakh and eighty-thousand. The chief of his wives were the well-known eight, Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Kalindi, Mitrabinda, Satya, Bhadra, and Lakshmana. The remaining sixteen thousand and one hundred were married to him on the same day. They belonged originally to the harem of king Naraka of Pragjyotish whom Krishna defeated and killed at the invitation of Indra, whose mother's ear-rings had been carried away by Naraka. While paying a visit after the battle to Indra's heaven in company with Satyabhama, this lady took fancy to Indra's famous parijat tree. To oblige his wife, Krishna had to fight with the God whom he had just favoured. Indra, though the chief of the Vedic Gods, and though he was helped by the latter on this occasion was indeed no match for the ' Incarnation of the Supreme Being ' and was forced to part with his favourite flower-tree, which was thus carried to Dwarka and planted there. The story of how he obtained his chief eight wives is very interesting. The story of how he got Rukmini is already told. Satyabhama was the daughter of Satrajit, a Yadava chief who gave her away in marriage to Krishna because he was afraid of him and wished to buy his favour. Jambavati was the daughter of Jambavana, a bear chief, against whom Krishna waged a long war to recover a precious gem he had taken away from a Yadava. Jambavana was defeated and presented his daughter to Krishna, as a peace-offering. Kalindi went through a series of austerities in order to get Krishna as her husband and her devotion was rewarded by the marriage she had sought. Mitrabinda was a cousin of Krishna and was carried off by him from the Swayamvara grounds. Satya was the daughter of Nagnajit, king of Ayodhya and was won by Krishna when he had achieved a brave feat of arms, namely, killing a number of naughty bulls belonging to Nagnajit. Bhadra was another cousin of Krishna and was married by him in the usual way. Lakshmana was the daughter of Brihatsena, king of Madra, and was carried off by him from the Swayamvara grounds.

Krishna's part in Arjuna's marriage with Subhadra, sister of Balarama and Krishna's half sister is noteworthy. In the course of his travels Arjuna arrived

at the holy place of Prabhasa, and was received by Krishna on the hill of Raivataka. There he was enamoured of Subhadni and asked Krishna how he could get her. Krishna advised him to carry her off as a brave Kshatriya without depending upon the chances of a Svayamvaram, the usual Kshatriya form of marriage. The Yadavas were at first enraged at this outrage, but when Krishna convinced them that Arjuna would be a very worthy husband for Subhadra. and that by carrying her off he had done nothing unworthy of a hero, they consented to the union. And how could they do otherwise? Krishna did not simply argue like us, poor talkers. He, as we have already seen, had backed his precepts by his example.

It is interesting to note how Krishna disposed of Jarasandha and Sishupala who created trouble at the Rajasuya performed by Yudhisthira. Jarasandha had imprisoned a large number of kings and intended to sacrifice them to Rudra. Unless he was killed and the imprisoned princes released and given an opportunity to pay homage to Yudhisthira, the latter's claim as emperor could not be established. Krishna therefore proceeded with Bhishma and Arjuna to Rajagriha, Jarasandha's capital, and challenged him to a single combat with anyone of them he might choose. Such a challenge could not be refused by a Kshatriya, and Jarasandha, at the anticipation of death at his opponent's hand, declared his son Sahadev as his heir apparent and chose Bhima as his opponent. The combat lasted thirteen days, and Jarasandha at length met with a painful death at his rival's hand. Having put Sahadev on his father's throne, and invited the released princes to attend Yudhisthira's Rajasuya, Krishna and his friends returned to Indraprastha.

In due course the Rajasuya came off. Of the various functions and duties connected with the ceremony, Krishna is said to have taken charge of washing the feet of the Brahmans. This is a sure indication of the comparative modernness of the Mahabharata, at any rate, of this story. For in ancient times, even when the supremacy of the Brahmans had been established, the Kshatriyas never paid them any servile honour. However when the sacrifice was over, the time came for Yudhisthira to make presents to the assembled princes, priests and other persons deserving honour. To whom must honour be paid first?

Yudhisthira having asked Bhishma's opinion on the matter, the latter replied that Krishna was the person to be honoured first. Accordingly Sahadeva at Yudhisthira's command presented the Arghya, the mark of honour, to Krishna, and the latter accepted it. This upset Sishupala, who made a long speech, challenging Krishna's right to the honour and abusing the Pandavas for paying any honour and Krishna for accepting it. Bhishma made another speech narrating Krishna's exploits and achievements at length, and



declaring his divinity. Sishupala rose again, rebutted Bhishma's arguments one after another, and grossly abused him. It is pointed out by Krishna's recent biographers, that of the charges brought against Krishna by Sishupala, there is no mention of his dealings with the Brindaban Gopis, a sure indication, according to them, that when the Mahabharata was composed, the story of these dealings of Krishna, a story made so much of by the writers of the Puranas and the later poets, was not conceived. However, at the end of Sishupala's speech Bhishma, who saw that Yudhishtira was afraid lest Sishupala and his followers might obstruct the completion of the ceremony, said, addressing them that if they were resolved to die they might challenge the divine Krishna himself to fight. At this Sishupala challenged Krishna, who rose in response and narrated his opponent's numerous misdeeds. Then with the words, "At the request of his mother, my aunt, I have pardoned a hundred of Sishupala's offences. But I cannot pardon the insulting words he has spoken of me before the assembled princes: I kill him before you all ". He threw his chakra at him and cut off his head

Actions of Krishna during the Mahabharata War may now be reviewed. The following are some of them:

1. When Satyaki, Krishna's friend, was hard pressed by Bhurisrava, son of Somadatta, Krishna induced Arjuna to cut off his arms, and thereby made it easy for Satyaki to kill him.

2. When Abhimanyu was unfairly surrounded and killed by seven Kaurava warriors, Arjuna vowed the death of the ring leader, Jayadratha, next day before sunset, or, failing that his own death by entering into fire. When the Sun was about to set, and Jayadratha remained unslain, Krishna miraculously hid the Sun, on which Jayadratha, having come out Krishna uncovered the Sun, and Arjuna killed Jayadratha when he was unaware.

3. Despairing of Drona being ever killed by fair means Krishna advised the Pandavas to kill him unfairly. If he could he made to cast down his arms, he could, Krishna said, be killed easily. This could be done if he was told that his son, Asvathama was dead. Bhima tried the suggested device He killed an elephant named after Drona's son and told him that Asvathama was killed. The warrior was somewhat depressed by the news, but did not quite believe it. At this juncture he was hard pressed by a number of sages to cease fighting and prepare himself for heaven with meditations worthy of a Brahmana. This checked the hero still more and he applied to the truthful Yudhishtira for correct information about his son. Finding Yudhishtira unwilling to tell a lie, Krishna overcame his reluctance by a long exhortation, in the course of which he announced his ethics of untruth in the following edifying text from Vasishtha's Smriti.

" In marriage, in amorous dealings, when one's life is in danger, when the whole of one's possession is going to be lost, and when a Brahman's interest is at stake, untruth should be told. The wise have said that speaking untruth on these five occasions is not a sin." Yudhisthir's scruples were stifled, and he said to his preceptor, " Yes, Asvathama is killed " adding in a low voice, " that is, an elephant " which last words, however were not heard by Dron. His depression was complete, and on hearing some bitterly reproachful words from Bhima, he gave up his arms, and while sitting in a meditative posture, was killed by Dhristhadyumna.

4. When Bhima was unsuccessfully fighting with Duryodhana by the side of the Dvaipayana Lake Krishna reminded him through Arjuna that he had vowed the breaking of his opponent's thighs. Now striking a rival below the navel was unfair, but as Duryodhana could not be killed except by such an unfair means, Krishna advised Bhima to adopt the same and Bhima did." The death of Krishna throws a flood of light on his morals. Krishna died as the Ruler of Dwaraka. What was this Dwaraka like and what sort of death awaited him?

In founding his city of Dwaraka he had taken care to settle thousands of ' unfortunates ' there. As the Harivamsa said: ' O, hero having conquered the abodes of the Daityas (giants) with the help of brave Yadus, the Lord settled thousands of public women in Dwaraka ". Dancing, singing and drinking by men and women married and prostitutes filled the city of Dwaraka. We get a description of a seatrip in which these women formed a principal source of enjoyment. Excited by their singing and dancing, the brothers Krishna and Balarama joined in the dancing with their wives. They were followed by the other Yadava chiefs and by Arjuna and Narada. Then a fresh excitement was sought. Men and women all fell into the sea and at Krishna's suggestion, the gentlemen began a jalakrida water sport, with the ladies, Krishna leading one party, and Balarama another, while the courtesans added to the amusement by their music. This was followed by eating and drinking and this again by a special musical performance in which the leaders themselves exhibited their respective skill in handling various musical instruments. It will thus be seen what a jolly people these Yadavas were, and with what contempt they would have treated the objections urged nowadays by the Brahmans and such other purists against notch parties and the native theatres. It was in one of these revels—a drunken revel—that the Yadavas were destroyed. They, it is said, had incurred the displeasure of a number of sages by a childish trick played on the latter by some of their boys. These boys disguised Samba, one of Krishna's sons, as a woman with child, tying an iron pestle below his navel, and asked the sages to say what child the 'woman' would give birth to. The

enraged sage said 'she' would produce an iron pestle which would be the ruin of the Yadavas. Fearing the worst consequences from this curse, the boys took the pestle to the sea-side and rubbed it away. But its particles came out in the form of *erakas*, a kind of reeds and its last remaining bit, which had been thrown into the sea, was afterwards recovered and used by a hunter as the point of an arrow; Now it was with these *erakas* that the Yadavas killed themselves. They had gone in large parties to the holy place of Prabhasa. They indulged in drinking there and this proved their ruin. The evils of drinking there had been found out at length by Krishna and some other Yadava leaders, and it was prohibited on pain of death by a public notification. But the prohibition had no effect. The drunken Yadavas at first quarrelled and then began to fight and kill one another. When some of Krishna's own sons were killed he himself joined in the fight and killed a large number of his own people. He then went in search of Balarama. He found him in meditative posture and saw his spirit passing out of his body in the form of a large serpent i.e., Sesa Naga, the divine snake whom he had incarnated. Krishna now felt that it was time for him also to pass away. He then bade farewell to his father and his wives, telling them that he had sent for Arjuna, who would take charge of them. Then he seated himself under a tree, hidden by its leafy and outstretching branches, and composed his mind in meditation. While thus sitting, a hunter named Jara mistook him for a deer and hit him with an arrow, one pointed with the last remaining bit of the fatal pestle. Discovering his mistake, the man fell at Krishna's feet and was pardoned and flew away to heaven, illumining all sides by its dazzling light. Arjuna came and proceeded towards Hastinapur with the surviving Yadavas men and women. But his good genius having left him he had lost the power of his hitherto mighty arm and his unrivalled skill as an archer. A number of Ahiras, armed only with lathis, attacked his party and carried off many of the women, and he reached Hastinapur only with a small remnant. After Arjuna's departure the sea engulfed Dwaraka, and nothing was left to speak of the Yadavas, their glories, their domestic broils and their revels.

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